

Two Steps Back

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Two Steps Back

by [AdrianaintheSnow](#)

Summary

Technoblade was a 20-year-old man who had been helping lead a rebel force against a corrupt government with Phil. Now he's 6!

Wilbur was a ghost haunting his father and was on the track to developing omnipotence. Now his mind's been shoved back into an 8-year-old's brain!

Phil had spent 14 years of his life coming to terms with his son's death in order to make new connections and try his best to save the world. Now his son's alive again and his war buddy won't eat anything green!

Technoblade, with his power to reverse time, has sent himself, his best friend and mentor, and (unknowingly) that best friend and mentor's son back in time 14 years to before the war that ended Phil's life began. But now what?

(Also known as Technoblade and the mortifying ordeal of 3rd grade.)

This is a sequel to *One Step Forward* and *Like Footprints on the Seashore*. It is a prequel to *One More Step Out of the Pit*. It is not a stand alone. Though you could read *One Step Forward*, *Like Footprints on the Seashore*, and this without reading *One More Step Out of the Pit*.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

14 Years Back

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

His freefall ended abruptly with him flat on his back as though he'd actually fallen. He laid there completely still for a long moment until his entire being seized with a burning that he couldn't comprehend.

Luckily, the body he was in wasn't as stupid as he was in that moment and forcibly shut his brain down long enough to force a rasping breath into its lungs. The sudden movement of the chest brought into sharp focus the fact that something was on top of him, weighing him down and scratching at the skin. He sat up abruptly and threw the offending item off. The sheet fluttered innocently to the floor.

He...

What?

It was mostly dark in the room, but there was a train shaped nightlight plugged into an outlet by the door which allowed him to see the vague shape of things at least. There was a nightstand with a lamp next to him. He reached for it, the fingers easily finding the button to turn it on through muscle memory alone.

He blinked as the bedroom came into focus. There was a white bookshelf next to a matching dresser on the wall nearest to the closet. The toy chest was flung open on the opposite wall, more of its contents spilled out onto the floor than packed away inside it.

The mouth felt dry, and he automatically reached for a bottle of water left on the nightstand without really thinking about it. The water was room temperature and a little stale, but he didn't care.

He had... not expected this. This was, of course, theoretically possible when dealing with time travel powers, but the thought had never crossed his mind. He'd been long dead before Technoblade and Dad had met. No one had even known Techno's powers were capable of overwriting so much time. Maybe they hadn't been until Dad fell from the sky.

He pulled more air into the lungs as he set the water bottle aside. Annoyingly, while the body seemed capable of automatically breathing most of the time, whenever he thought about it, the lungs stilled, and he had to manually force them to move again.

He was unsure what to do now. He sat at the edge of the bed. It was strange to feel something pressing back up from underneath him. He thought he could hear a heart beating, but it might have been his imagination.

He studied the room. It was familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. It had been taken apart long ago, but now it was back to what it had been before. The last he'd seen most of this furniture was in an old warehouse. The last he'd seen this room; it had felt like he was going insane.

His eyes fell on the closet. That had been the only thing that hadn't changed when Dad had moved out. He remembered sitting there staring at it for days once. Right now, it was slightly open, and he could see the shadow of clothing inside.

The impulse that came upon him was as irrational as it was irresistible. He needed to do one thing before he did anything else.

He stood. His legs were steady underneath him though they felt unnaturally tired. Maybe that was just him forgetting how legs felt, maybe not. He flicked on the main light on his way to the closet.

The sweater was near the front of the closet. It was odd to see it intact and unstained. And corporal. The lion face on it sneered at him and he ripped the garment off its hanger. For good measure, he dug the trousers out of the dresser as well.

He walked to the kitchen with purpose. He knew exactly where Dad kept the matches, safely out of reach of an 8-year-old in a cabinet above the refrigerator. He grabbed a chair to climb up onto the counter with. It was strange not being able to just float up to his desired height.

He was very, very careful as he opened the cabinet door above the fridge. He had to stretch perilously on tippy toes to grab the pack of matches deep in the cabinet. Once done, he hopped down off the counter and put the chair back in place.

He grabbed the small pile of clothing from where he'd left it on the floor and marched into the back yard. The neighbors had a fire pit, he recalled, stealing into their yard.

Technically, he knew how matches worked. Functionally, it took him a few tries before one actually lit. He dropped it abruptly onto a pile of dry leaves he'd gathered and piled on top of the sweater.

It was slow to burn and it more melted than properly burned since it was made of polyester. Still, with the addition of some extra firewood, both pieces of clothing burned well enough.

He watched it as it burned. The fire was almost too warm on his face, but he moved his hand closer to the flames anyway to chase the sensation.

Was he Wilbur now?

He didn't think so. Wilbur was a memory. He wasn't a person anymore. There were traces of him that lingered certainly. Perhaps all of him was here, just in scattered pieces. However, Ghostbur knew as much about where to start putting Wilbur back together as he would know where to start putting the sweater burning in the fire pit back together. Even now parts of it burned unpleasantly in his lungs.

When he was satisfied that the sweater was nothing but ash, he put the lid on the fire pit to smother the dying flames.

Then, he went back inside.

He didn't bother putting the matches back where they'd been. He just stuck them by Dad's keys on the counter.

His body seemed to drag with exhaustion. Which, to be fair, it was the middle of the night. It was 3:35am to be exact. He should probably go back to sleep, but the thought made his unfamiliar heart beat harder. He was irrationally afraid that if he went to sleep, his soul would slip out of his body once again.

Instead, he decided with the smell of burning lion sweater still lingering on his current clothes, that he wanted a sweater, a better sweater. He wanted a *big* sweater.

His feet knew where to go to get such a sweater even if it took his mind a second to catch up. His Dad's bedroom door was opening with a soft creak before he realized it.

A snore startled Ghostbur more than it should have, and he looked over to see a man sleeping peacefully on the bed.

He stilled. He'd forgotten, well no, that wasn't true. He hadn't forgotten, he'd just decided to force himself to not think about *that*. His quest for an adequate sweater quickly fled his mind and he ended up standing at the side of the bed.

There was another dimension to agony when you had a body. It hit much, much harder, and this eight-year-old body that had never felt anything of the like almost crumbled underneath it. The stab of grief not yet confronted was as sharp as the stab of a blade, he knew for sure. His heart hurt even though Dad was breathing, calm and safe right here. He put his hands on the bed, dizzy with it.

"Dad," he said. His voice was unfamiliar in his ears, and it startled him to hear it crack. A twitch ran across Dad's brow. "Dad," he said a bit louder. He bounced the bed slightly with his hands. "Wake up."

"Mmm?" Dad hummed, still very much asleep. "Techno?"

The smallest bit of the unfamiliar pressure in his chest eased at hearing the name. It had seemed like Dad was being taken along by Techno's powers too when he'd stayed as the world turned back, but it had been a painful possibility that he wouldn't remember. The pain of having seen him die, at having seen him fall from the sky, remained, but at least he was here now. At least he hadn't been erased.

"No, Dad," Ghostbur said. "It's me."

Dad's eyes opened slightly then, and he squinted up at Ghostbur. "Will?" he asked, his voice quiet and still dazed. A large hand came up to touch his cheek, warm in a way the fire could have never been. It seemed to burn the name into his skin the barest amount.

"Hi," he said. There was another arm on him then, scooping him off the floor.

Dad was still not awake, awake, Ghostbur noted. He curled his body around Ghostbur's as much as he could and used his wings to hide him away from the world the rest of way.

"Dad?" Ghostbur asked.

A kiss was pressed to his brow. "My boy," Dad whispered and seemed to fall asleep immediately. Ghostbur looked up at him, fondness prickling at the tip of his fingers in an unfamiliar way.

He thought he'd watch his dad sleep for a while, but after only a few moments, he slipped away into sleep too.



[from Imgflip Meme Generator](#)

Like a Memory You Can't Quite Call to Mind

Chapter Notes

Count the number of times Phil completely fumbles the realization that Wilbur is acting at all oddly.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Phil woke up slowly, his head pulsing with a dull headache. He felt odd. He felt like he'd been run over by a truck, except upon taking stock of his body before even opening his eyes, he couldn't actually pinpoint any aches or pains. In fact, he thought he felt better physically than he had in a long time.

Even the sheets he felt against his arm when he shifted were softer than the ones he'd grown used too, not to mention the plush mattress underneath him. He wondered if he'd somehow stolen Kurtis's bed for the night, the only mattress on the farm that was less than 20-years-old, bought as a gift when the man started getting back problems in his old age.

There was also the issue of a warm body pressed up against him. Phil wasn't exactly known for snuggling up with any of the survivors even if everyone had to sleep in close quarters and it was too small to be any of them besides. Bea the dog came to mind (though she usually slept with Deedee) however Phil's hand was touching smooth skin and not fur.

Opening his eyes was not easy. Something was trying to draw him back into the oblivion he'd woken from though he didn't feel truly physically tired. When he did manage to get them open, there wasn't much to see. Sunlight was streaming through window blinds, leaving bars of light across the bed sheets and rumpled comforter.

He didn't recognize the bed or sheets at once though they pinged oddly in his mind like a memory he knew existed but couldn't quite call to mind. He mostly only got a view of his own black feathers puffed up and curled in front of him, covering the curious little warm form completely.

He went to move the wings in a quest to discover what exactly he was hugging but paused when he saw a flash of white within the mass. There was a single white feather amongst the sea of black that he at first didn't attribute to himself until he tried to grab it and it stayed firm. Strange. Was that a form of aging? He hadn't thought feathers typically went white like human hair, especially not like that.

He shrugged it off after a moment and returned to the topic at hand. He moved his wings, white feather and all, out of the way, so he could see what was next to him.

The face did not compute at first. Phil's brain seemed to go offline for a long moment. He knew he knew the face, but the old rusty synapses in his brain did not fire correctly to tell him who it was. His body reacted to the situation before his mind managed to sort out what was happening. He felt his chest start to ache and his stomach turn itself inside out.

His hand didn't feel like his own as he reached out; he watched it move with detached wonder. He brushed a gentle finger across the little nose and watched as the figure squirmed slightly at being disturbed.

"Wilbur?" Phil asked in a whisper.

The boy went still at the sound of his name and then jolted suddenly awake as though Phil had dumped ice water on his head instead of touching him gently and saying his name. His deep brown eyes were different than Phil remembered. The curl of his hair and the curve of his nose were all things that could be more or less accurately captured in photos, but a 2-D still image of a person's eyes did not capture the soul within.

Phil had forgotten the truth of them. They seemed deeper somehow than memory said they'd been.

It took a moment for Wilbur to calm down, but once he did, he peered up at Phil. "Hi Dad," he said.

Was this real, Phil wondered. It couldn't be, part of his brain was saying, but the rest of it was somehow certain that it was. What had... something had happened.

He cast his mind back to where he'd been and what he'd been doing before he'd woken up. They'd been taking back Zone 8. He'd fought Bad and had won and then Werner had.

Oh.

Well, that explained a few things.

"Um," Wilbur said after a few moments of Phil not responding to him. He squirmed a little bit in Phil's arms. "Um, Daddy," he said. "I need to pee."

"Huh?"

Wilbur wiggled a bit more insistently. "I gotta go to the bathroom. Let me up."

Speechless, because they were both supposed to be dead and no depiction of the afterlife Phil had ever heard of involved them still needing to pee, Phil loosened his grip on the boy.

He shot up like a racehorse coming out of the gate. The door to the nearby bathroom slammed shut behind him.

It was his bathroom, Phil realized. This was his bedroom. That's why it was so familiar, but he didn't recognize it because he'd sold this house over a decade ago. Slowly, he got to his feet. The carpet felt the same as it once had, and he could see the shadow of an apple juice stain he'd tried to hide by putting a nightstand over it. He pressed his hand to the top of his old dresser, finding it solid under his touch. He could smell the air freshener he always used to buy, a warm vanilla and caramel scent that pinged nostalgically at his nose. It was like he'd gone back in time.

That's when an option other than him having died and gone to the afterlife occurred to him.

Had he gone back in time? Techno had a time travel power that undid death. It had only ever been his own, yes, but it was possible he could have done so for Phil as well. Why so far back though? All he'd needed to do was rewind to when they were back at Kurtis's farm a few hours before and warn everyone about the ambush.

Phil heard the sink turn on in the bathroom.

This amount of time... it was unheard of. Then again, Techno's type of power was rare itself let alone one as powerful as his had already been.

He looked up as the bathroom door opened again.

It was his first time seeing Wilbur alive without assuming it was a dream or that he himself was dead.

"Dad?" he called probably because Phil was staring at him blankly.

"Hey," Phil said. He took a cautious step forward and then bent to get on his knees in front of him. "Hi, Wilbur." He reached up to cup the little boy's face. "Hi."

"Hi," Wilbur returned. He must be slightly confused but he didn't reject Phil's affection.

Phil leaned forward and kissed his forehead. "Hello."

Hands reached back for Phil, grasping lightly at the front of his t-shirt as Phil carefully stroked his hand through his son's hair.

A soft grumbling sound interrupted the moment of silence that had fallen between them.

Phil blinked. "You're hungry," he said.

"Um," Wilbur replied. "Yeah?"

"Breakfast then."

Wilbur nodded and Phil reached forward to swoop him up into his arms before considering the fact that an 8-year-old maybe didn't want to get carried around everywhere. Hadn't Wilbur been in a phase where he hadn't wanted to be carried around by Phil all the time when he'd died? Phil couldn't quite remember, but Wilbur didn't protest the picking up now.

Phil carried him down the steps and had the strongest case of déjà vu he'd ever experienced walking into his old kitchen. (Was it déjà vu if it had definitely happened before... or if he was at least 85% sure it had happened before?)

There was a chair pulled out slightly from the kitchen table that Phil remembered setting Wilbur down in a million times, but he didn't set him down in it today. Instead, he shifted Wilbur's weight so he was supporting him against his shoulder with only one arm.

"Let's see what we have," Phil said aloud while opening the refrigerator. There wasn't much, at least not that he could identify. There were a good number of Tupperware containers he didn't know the contents of, and knowing himself did not trust if he couldn't remember exactly when he'd made it. There was a pork roast thawing at the bottom of the fridge probably intended for dinner that night. Other than that, it was just the basics. "We have eggs and milk," he said, "and olives. Why do we have olives? I don't like olives. Do you like olives?"

Wilbur just tilted his head to stare at him.

"Eggs it is."

It wasn't difficult to cook eggs while holding Wilbur. He used to do things like cook with him in his arms since he was a baby. (Toddler Wilbur had been a menace when not being constantly watched especially after he'd realized he could hum at the right frequency and knock things off high shelves into his arms). The motions came back to him as naturally as breathing had come back to him when he'd woken this morning.

Wilbur had no complaints, his feet digging lightly into Phil's hips.

Once he'd put the eggs and the toast he'd also made onto two plates, he reluctantly settled Wilbur into his seat, lingering to ruffle his hair lightly as he drew away. Phil took his own seat at the table.

They ate mostly in silence. Phil didn't exactly know what to say and it seemed he'd thoroughly weirded Wilbur out so that he wasn't saying anything as well. Instead, Phil's eyes drifted to look at his kitchen. It was... so familiar and so very, very not.

His eyes caught on a calendar on the refrigerator, turned to August of 2002. That calendar on that month was more familiar than it should have been. He didn't think he'd ever found the willpower to change it again until he'd thrown it away moving out. Phil's breath caught.

"What's the date?" Phil asked. Wilbur blinked up at him with a blank expression. "Right. You're 8. Never mind."

He wished that he was the type of man to cross out days as they came, but unfortunately, he'd always been overconfident that he'd be able to remember what the previous day was without a red cross over it. He'd usually been right up until this point.

"How did people used to figure out the date without smart phones?" Phil mumbled to himself. "Wasn't there a number you could call?"

Unsure what else to do, he started searching his house for a phonebook. Wilbur watched him from the table, probably thinking about how odd his father was acting that morning.

He managed to remember how a phone book worked well enough to find the number labeled Time Date and Temperature. Wilbur ate the last bite of his breakfast as the recording of a woman's voice spoke over the telephone.

"Today's date is August 6th, 2002. The time is 6:42am. The current temperature is-" Phil hung up the phone, not caring about the temperature. August 6th. It was 5 days before Wilbur died. He set the landline phone back on its base with a slow breath and sunk down in the nearest chair.

Wilbur shoved the last of his eggs into his mouth and then stood up from his own chair, walking over to Phil and raising his arms to be picked up much like he had when he'd been a toddler. Phil grabbed him and pulled him up onto his lap.

"Oh Wilbur," Phil said, hugging him close. His hair smelled like the shampoo Phil always used to buy him (he hadn't realized he still even remembered the scent) and, oddly, of smoke.

Phil held him for a few minutes and Wilbur returned the embrace with as much force as his 8-year-old arms could muster.

It was only because he was pressed up against Phil so hard that Phil noticed the little twitches. He jerked once and then again.

“Um, D...” Wilbur said, drawing back a bit. “Dad?”

“Yes?”

“Do you...” another twitch, “something to do today.”

Phil shook his head. “I don’t have anything to do. I’m calling off work today.”

Wilbur looked at him, eyes oddly intense. “But wasn’t there something...” another twitch, “there something reallyally... really important.”

“No,” Phil said, sure there was nothing happening with anyone or anything from this time that was more important than what he was doing right then.

Yet, as he looked into Wilbur’s slightly worried eyes, he recalled perhaps there was something from a different time that was rather important.

“Well,” Phil said slowly. “Maybe there is. But.” He found himself gripping Wilbur tighter.

Technoblade was out there. Technoblade was out there, and he was, what? 5? 6 physically? Phil needed to find him. He’d already be making his way out of the Nether, having done it once before. Unfortunately, he was probably doing so with a couple of resets. Considering Phil thought he’d slept for a while after coming back, Techno could already be out of the Nether and in the city or at least fighting his way through the Nether as Phil sat there.

Wilbur twitched just slightly again.

“Um, Aunt Puffy could watch me,” Wilbur suggested. Aunt Puffy? Had Phil and Puffy been that close at the time. He did recall Puffy had babysat Wilbur on occasion, but he didn’t remember Wilbur ever calling her his aunt. Maybe it was a newer thing in this time.

Puffy was certainly an idea though, a better one than Wilbur knew. She was one of the few people he’d be able to even start to trust to watch his son and was the only one who knew Phil now.

“Right,” Phil said. “Puffy. Puffy can watch you. I’ll only be a bit, then I’ll come right home.”

Wilbur nodded and Phil nodded back. Still, he did not let the boy go, but just reached for the nearby telephone with one arm. Luckily, he did remember Puffy’s number off the top of his head, having called her a few late nights after... He brushed a hand through Wilbur’s hair.

Puffy answered on the third ring only sounding slightly confused that he was calling her. “Hi Puffy,” Phil said. “I have a favor to ask.”

Chapter End Notes

Phil: *Watching Wilbur staring silently at his hands.* Man, I must be really freaking my child out with my behavior.

Wilbur: And I have hands. Wow. I have those now. Huh.

(Also be aware some typos in this may not be typos. ;)

...Unfortunately, knowing myself... some typos might also just be typos.)

Again

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Techno hadn't given himself a chance to think since waking. He'd snapped back into consciousness in a very distantly familiar cell a few hours ago. It had been the cell they'd given him before he'd become a headliner in the fighting ring. (The one from before he had a name.)

He'd been in the mindset of a reset without truly comprehending any peculiarities of this particular one. He just knew he'd gone back in time, so he needed to act. He had to get out of the cell, out of the fighting ring, and out of The Pit. Then, he needed to find Phil.

The first three steps were... not easy in his current state, but manageable with a few smaller resets and some prior knowledge of the best way to escape these things. It was almost easier this time to get out of The Pit since his escape attempts came in the early morning instead of when the ring was at its fullest. Also, no one even entertained the idea he'd be able to do something like that in his current form. Sure, he was at more of a size disadvantage this time around, but in the end, it didn't hinder him too much.

It wasn't until he was out in the early morning light standing in an undestroyed city that he paused to think about what had happened.

He'd reversed time, but it hadn't been like any of the times he'd done so before. He hadn't died.

Phil had died.

The reversal also wasn't only a couple of minutes or even days like usual. He hadn't dedicated much brain power to staring at his far too small hands and feet, but he'd felt the impact while taking out the grown guards at the fighting ring. Just the fact that he was in the fighting ring meant he'd gone back at least 6 years. It was probably much more.

He'd gone back so many years that Phil wouldn't even know him.

The realization was perhaps an obvious one, but it stopped Techno in his tracks.

Phil wouldn't know him. Niki was probably a toddler and Deedee might still be in college judging by how small Techno was right now. They *also* wouldn't know him. No one on the surface would know him.

What was Techno supposed to *do*?

Well...

Find Phil, of course. It didn't matter if he wouldn't have any idea who Techno was, the obvious first step was to find Phil. Phil would be Phil at the end of the day. The technicalities like having no memory of Techno's existence would not matter.

Once he'd found Phil, he'd, well, he didn't know. Cling to the man's legs and scream if anyone tried to remove him? Was he physically too old for something like that? He wasn't sure.

Still, that left the issue of finding Phil. Techno had no idea where to start. The city landscape was vastly different than he was used to. Sure, Techno had seen it briefly from a car or the air a couple of times before its destruction and he had run blindly through it once, but he'd never tried to navigate these streets when they were still, well, streets.

He ended up wandering aimlessly for maybe an hour with no clue as to where he was and unable to find any landmarks. His eyes kept looking for walls separating zones and scorched buildings on the horizon.

People looked at him strangely, likely because he was very small and very dirty and kept squinting at the skyline in open bewilderment.

Eventually, he managed to deduce that the mayor's tower must just literally not exist yet and subtracting that from his expectations made things somewhat easier. He spotted a suited-up man flying towards a somewhat familiar building that he thought might be Guild HQ before some addition or another and in a different color.

Assuming he'd actually identified Guild HQ, he then knew approximately where he was, but then he realized... he still did not know where he was going.

He needed a destination so he wasn't just wandering the city (especially since more people were around now to stare at him in concern) and preferably one that would get him nearer to Phil. However, he was not going to the Hero's Guild even if they'd had no biases against him right now. (He could not assure *he* did not have any biases against *them* and did not feel like being the perpetrator of another murder spree so soon.)

The only place he could think of going was the rendezvous point they'd set up before taking back Zone 8. He recalled that Phil had said he'd once lived near it, and perhaps he did in this time. Techno was fully prepared to start knocking on random doors near the rendezvous point until he found Phil, but first he had to actually find the place.

It took him a couple of hours and he mostly went off Phil's idle descriptions of what the neighborhood and park had looked like before the war instead of off his own memories. Eventually, however, he found it.

The park actually looked like a park in this time with a small pond instead of a muddy hole and a pile of rubble. It was nice and Techno thought he could probably find a place to sleep in the bushes or trees if he didn't find Phil by nightfall. There were also a few street vendors setting up for lunch nearby and a lot of trashcans. So, Techno would be able to find something to eat at least.

First though, he really needed a small rest. His legs burned like hell from walking all over the city after having lived in a cell for however much time his younger self had spent there. He sat on a nearby bench and instantly realized he may have pushed this body a bit much physically because the second he gave it any relief, it just about passed out.

Maybe he should lay down.

His head hit the wooden bench a bit harder than intended as a wave of dizziness settled over him. He curled his legs up to his chest with a groan.

He wondered idly as he laid there when this body had last eaten. He didn't feel hungry, but that might just be because he was too hungry. He decided it was best to get up and look for food.

In a bit.

He wasn't quite sure how long he laid there with his ears ringing slightly. He might have even fallen asleep. He didn't know.

It was a voice that jerked him out of his daze. "Techno?"

It was Phil's voice and Techno wondered if he'd imagined the last few hours and was back at Kurtis and Deedee's or even back in the trainyard. Then he realized his face was still pressed into a park bench.

Techno squinted up at Phil, idly noticing that the sun had moved a bit across the sky. He felt slightly better, but also really hungry and thirsty. "Phil?"

"Oh, thank god," Phil said. "I've been looking all over the city for you, but I didn't actually know what you'd look like or even if you'd made it up here yet."

"You know who I am?" Techno asked, frowning.

"I do, yes," Phil said. "I don't know how, but I do."

"Huh," Techno said. "That's cool."

"That's all you have to say?" Phil asked, sounding amused.

He hummed. "Glad you're alive."

"Well, thank you," Phil said. "Actually, really, thank you."

"Any time, Phil." Techno set his head back down on the bench then and closed his eyes.

"Are you alright?"

"I don't think I've eaten in a long time," Techno answered without opening his eyes. "Or drank anything for that matter. I might be dying or going into a comma."

Hands were tugging at him the second the words left his mouth. "We need to get you something to eat then."

Techno groaned. "Can't you just tell me your address and kill me?"

"No," Phil said firmly. "I cannot."

"Ugh, fine," Techno said, forcing himself to sit up and blinking the spots out of his vision the best he could. He stood up, rubbing his eyes tiredly.

"Oh," Phil said, sounding surprised.

"What?" Techno asked, peering up at him.

"Nothing," Phil said, staring at him oddly. "It's just you're... very small."

Techno glowered at him, but it just made Phil's odd expression more pronounced.

“God, and you’re skinny,” Phil fussed, his eyes roving over him. “We really do need to get you something to eat. Come on. There’s a restaurant across the street.”

Techno let Phil lead him almost without any complaint. He did shoot him a confused and disgruntled look when the man tried to take Techno’s hand while crossing the street.

The restaurant was one Techno unsurprisingly didn’t recognize. It was a small diner mostly with booths and a counter people could sit at.

Phil stopped him before walking in and threw his coat over Techno’s shoulders.

“Your clothes are a bit ragged,” he explained. “Just pretend you’re cold.”

Techno shrugged and slipped his arms into the jacket. It fell far past his knees. It was weird being shorter than Phil again. The jacket was warm; he hadn’t realized he was chilly until right then.

They slid into one of the booths and Techno was disgruntled to realize his feet didn’t quite touch the floor when sitting. He was busy frowning at his own feet when the waitress walked over.

“Good morning,” he said extremely cheerfully while grinning at Techno in an odd way. Techno stared back at her blankly.

“Hi,” Phil said for him.

“How are the two of you today?” she asked, still chipper, while handing Phil a normal menu. Techno was accustomed to getting a menu also from the few times he’d dined out with Phil, but instead she set a paper mat in front of Techno along with some crayons.

Techno looked at the paper mat and then at the waitress and then at Phil.

“Could he possibly have a regular menu as well?” Phil asked.

“Oh, of course,” she said. She turned and leaned over the counter to get another menu. “Here you go, buddy.” She plopped the menu down in front of him and then kept looking at him all while smiling. “Having a fancy father-son lunch today, hun?”

“I’m *not* his son,” Techno said immediately. “And why are you calling me nicknames? We are not on a nickname level of intimacy.”

“...We’re uh,” Phil hesitated as the waitress turned to look at him with less of a smile and more of a pinch to her brow, “currently in the adoption process and we’re not quite using those... terms.”

Techno went to open his mouth to argue that he was not in fact being adopted, but Phil kicked him lightly in the shin. His shin was very bruised, so it hurt far more than Phil had likely intended it to.

“What?” Techno asked, as the waitress walked away, seeming satisfied with Phil’s lie.

“You have to be careful about what you say,” Phil said, lowering his voice so no one else could hear them.

“Why?”

“Because you’re, what? Six?” Phil said. “Just let people assume we’re related somehow. Don’t argue.”

“But we’re not related,” Techno said. “You’re just my friend. My very special friend, but my friend.”

Phil pressed two fingers to the bridge of his nose, “and if you say that to any responsible adult with your 6-year-old mouth, they’re going to call the police.”

“Why?”

“Just trust me and figure out what you’re going to eat.”

Techno huffed but turned his attention to the menu. He couldn’t actually read the words, but there were enough pictures, and he knew enough about what diners usually had to make a decision. The waitress came back with glasses of water (which Techno happily accepted) and took their orders.

Phil pushed his own glass of water over to Techno as she walked away. Techno drank Phil’s glass after his own, ignoring the slight stomachache that came from consuming a lot of liquid at once. He still felt thirsty somehow, but figured it was best to take a break on the water for now.

He rubbed his face, feeling extremely tired again. He caught sight of his hand as he did so and drew it back to stare at the too small fingers. “Well,” he sighed. “This is something.”

Phil nodded in agreement and then seemed to hesitate for a moment over something before speaking. “Wilbur’s alive.”

Techno suddenly felt a lot more awake. “What?”

“It’s, uh, about a week before he’d died actually,” Phil said. “So, he’s... yeah.”

Technoblade wasn’t sure what to say. Even though he hadn’t thought about it, the news was not a surprise. It was almost like he’d already known. Maybe he had in a way. He’d done this after all and, well, he knew he would have done that in a heartbeat if he could, and he could, so he had.

It was rather simple if... unexpected.

“That’s great, Phil.”

“It...” Phil paused for a moment and then smiled a smile that was different than anything Techno had seen from him before. “It is.”

Well, that was a new addition to this mess.

Phil seemed to be thinking along the same lines because he sighed. “God, what do we even *do* now?”

“Honestly, I’m just glad you remember my name.”

“Mayor Werner hasn’t even been elected,” Phil said. “We should actually try to stop that. We’re going to have to stop that, aren’t we?”

“Eventually,” Techno agreed. “Also, maybe get rid of all of the skeletons buried under the city.”

“That’s a good idea,” Phil agreed. “We should just zombie proof the city in general the best we can. Oh, there is going to be so much to do.”

They briefly discussed ideas of what needed to be done while they waited for their food, but truly nothing seemed too urgent. There were many things they couldn’t even start working on for years.

By the time the check came and Phil paid, they were on the topic of more immediate concerns. Obviously, Wilbur wouldn't be leaving Phil's sight on the day of his death, but Phil still planned to track down his killer and make sure they were completely out of the way before the date. (Though, Techno imagined if he could reverse time 14 years to bring Wilbur back once, he could probably do it again.)

There was also the concern about what to do with Techno. Obviously, he'd be going back to Phil's house, but there'd be some technicalities to deal with since Techno didn't have a birth certificate or anything of the like. Not to mention there was the issue of actually introducing him to Wilbur.

"Wilbur always was a bit of a jealous child," Phil cautioned as they walked up to what was apparently his front door. They'd gotten a cab, so Techno didn't have to walk the whole way. "So, I'm sorry if he's a bit grumpy with someone he sees as a new child in the house. He'll warm up eventually."

"I think I can handle an 8-year-old's dramatics," Techno assured dryly.

"I know," Phil said. "Just don't hold it against him. He's really a sweet kid."

Techno honestly didn't care how 'sweet' he was. He was Phil's kid. Phil's up until this morning dead kid. The thing could stab him with a knife and Phil would hear no complaints from Techno.

Phil unlocked his front door and led Techno inside. It was a nice house, Techno thought even though he wasn't seeing much of it. It smelled nice at least and was much warmer than outside. He probably didn't need Phil's coat anymore.

"Wilbur," Phil called. "Could you come here for a minute. I have someone I want you to meet."

There were hurried footsteps from somewhere deeper in the house. A child (unfortunately slightly taller than Techno currently was) ran into the room at top speed. Phil had to catch him to keep him from falling down.

"Hey, Will," Phil said, hands lingering as Wilbur managed to get his feet steady underneath himself again. "We have a guest."

Wilbur glanced over at Techno, seeming to be waiting for something.

"This is Technoblade," Phil continued. "He's going to be staying with us for a bit. Technoblade, this is Wilbur."

Wilbur looked at Techno and Techno looked at Wilbur.

Techno's first thought upon seeing Wilbur was that Phil's kid looked absolutely nothing like him. When thinking of Wilbur before now, Techno had always envisioned him as a miniature Phil with maybe a freckle or two in the wrong place, but he looked nothing like the image Techno had in his head of him.

His hair was dark brown, a striking contrast to Phil's light hair and so full of curls that he could probably hide a dozen pens in it without anyone seeing. His eyes also didn't resemble Phil's in shape nor color. His bottom lip was significantly bigger than his top one unlike Phil's that looked about the same size and his ears weren't as flat on the top as Phil's. *Maybe* their noses were similar, but in the way that meant you probably had a common ancestor 7 generations ago. They had approximately the same skin color, but Wilbur's had more of a reddish undertone than Phil's.

He just didn't look like Phil's kid at all. If Techno himself wasn't standing in his own 6-year-old body, he might have assumed Phil had had a psychotic break and had kidnapped a kid thinking it was his own. Even knowing they'd traveled back in time he was about to open his mouth to question the child's appearance, but then Wilbur seemed to finish studying him.

He smiled at Techno, a smile that took over his face from the curve of his lips to the light creases on his forehead, and *oh. There* was Phil.

"Hi Techno," Wilbur said, "I'm your new big brother."

Techno blinked at the child and the child blinked back. "No," Techno said. "Absolutely not. We are not doing that."

"Ah, Wilbur," Phil cut in. "Techno is just staying with us for a bit. He's not your brother."

Wilbur tilted his head at his father, "Mmmm too late," he said. "He's my baby brother now."

"No," Techno said firmly despite how squeaky his voice was currently. "That is not happening. Don't call me that ever again."

Wilbur turned to look him directly in the eyes, his smile twisting into something different. "Baby. Brother. Technoblade."

"Phil," Techno complained.

"Wilbur," Phil scolded, but even Techno could see his heart wasn't in it. The little devil child clearly sensed this weakness too.

"I'm going to go put all of my best blankets in his new room," Wilbur declared cheerfully, turning to run up the steps.

Techno turned to Phil. "I thought you said he'd be unhappy I was here. What was *that*?"

Phil was looking at the stairs Wilbur had just disappeared up. "That was... Wilbur, I suppose."

Chapter End Notes

Oh, Techno, you have no idea how very too late it is for protests. >:D

And Oh How Things Change; Oh How They Stay The Same

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ghostbur couldn't help but stare at the reflection in the mirror. He had long gotten used to not seeing his own reflection. Seeing it now was odd; it had startled him when he'd caught sight of it.

"Wilbur, are you okay in there?" Puffy's voice calling through the door snapped him out of his trance.

"Uh," Ghostbur replied. "Yeah. I'll be out in a minute."

He must have been there for a long time, he realized. His knees were starting to ache where they dug into porcelain. He'd climbed up onto the sink to get a closer look.

He touched the mirror where his face was and was startled to realize he'd left fingerprints behind. He pulled away from the mirror and hopped off the sink. Still staring at himself, he turned on the water and slowly washed his hands.

He'd been distracted when Dad was around. He hadn't noticed his reflection in the mirror earlier, or at least, he hadn't attributed any importance to it. He'd been too absorbed with the fact that Dad was seeing him to think of much else. Even the reality of what was surely going on with Techno had briefly slipped his mind. At least, until the resets started and reminded him. He'd then reminded Dad.

Now with Dad not hovering, Ghostbur had time to think and to notice things.

One thing he noticed while drying his hands was an oddly lighter spot in his otherwise dark brown hair. His hair was thick and curly, so he had to dig for the white streak, but it was obvious once he'd separated it from the rest.

"Huh," he said to his reflection, thinking of Techno's fully white hair. "Makes sense." He carefully weaved the small bits of white hair back into his normal brown. He'd need to either cut it or find a way to dye it brown going forward. For now, he was sure Dad and Techno would be too distracted to notice, let alone make the connection.

Puffy was waiting for him outside the bathroom door. She'd been awfully clingy today; Ghostbur wondered if Dad had said something before leaving that had put her on high alert. It was probable considering Wilbur's death day was less than a week away and Dad was certainly paranoid about it.

"What would you like to do now?" Puffy asked with a gentle smile. The expression looked weird on her somehow. Ghostbur was used to seeing Puffy talking to adults. He'd seen her doing work as a hero and hanging out with coworkers. He'd seen her comfort Dad after Wilbur's death. He'd even seen her flirt (awkwardly) with Niki.

Ghostbur had seen her on the worst days of her life, and now she was talking to him with a fake smile on her face that adults put on for cute animals and small children. It felt wrong.

"Uh," Ghostbur said. What he wanted to do was start setting up Technoblade's new room, but he couldn't do that with her breathing down his neck. Yet, he could tell just by looking at her face that she wasn't planning on leaving him alone. He internally sighed. "How about coloring?"

“Oh, that sounds fun!” she said cheerfully. “Where’s your coloring stuff?”

“In my room,” Ghostbur replied. At least, he assumed that’s where it was. It had been a while since he’d touched it.

“Well then, lead the way.”

Ghostbur did, walking down the hall towards his bedroom. It was his first time seeing it in the light of day, and it gave Ghostbur a sense of vertigo when he stepped foot in it.

“Where’s your stuff?” Puffy prompted again when Ghostbur froze in the doorway. Right. He swallowed down the unfamiliar sensation of nausea building in his stomach and stepped fully into his room. His eyes settled on the far too familiar toy chest. His color supplies were probably there, he concluded from vague recollections.

He forced himself to move towards it, kneeling down in front of it to peer inside the already open chest. There was nothing particularly scary about the toy chest, not really. Not without context.

When he touched the side, a full body shudder went through him. People sometimes spoke about a sensation they described as someone walking over their grave. Ghostbur felt that this description was accurate to how he felt right now.

He reached quickly in and grabbed a booklet of papers, a box of crayons, and a thin tray. As he pulled away, he noticed a blot of something where his hand had touched the side of the toy chest.

“Is everything alright?” Puffy asked.

“Yeah, uh,” Ghostbur said. “I think I maybe got some blue paint on my toybox.” And maybe he had. He hadn’t paid much attention before putting his hand there, and it wasn’t as though the blue stain was in the shape of his hand. It was just a light, almost unnoticeable blot of something blue.

He still had to take a breath to remind himself he could.

He shook it off and turned away from the toy chest. He set out the tray on the floor and tore a piece of paper out of the notebook before laying down on his stomach in front of it. Puffy walked over and lowered herself to the floor as well.

“Do you mind if I color too?” she asked.

“Sure,” Ghostbur said.

She flipped to the last page of the booklet of blank paper and used the cardboard back to draw on. It was silent for a few minutes as they both drew.

“What are you drawing?” Puffy broke the silence eventually. It was a fair question. Ghostbur’s hands were small, unpracticed, and using low-quality crayons. It looked like shit.

“A train,” Ghostbur replied, frowning at it. Oh well, he was 8. No one would judge his art skills, not even Techno who was the intended recipient of the drawing. Ghostbur would restrain himself from labeling it as “To Technoblade” or “Welcome Home” until later.

“It’s a very nice train.”

Ghostbur did not roll his eyes no matter how much he wanted too. At least Puffy had just proven his point.

After the train, Ghostbur drew a duck which came out slightly better since it wasn't as complicated as a train, but still wasn't good. He decided to label the drawings with arrows so people would at least know what he was *trying* to make.

...Then again, Techno was the intended recipient, and he didn't read, so Wilbur would have to explain to him what they were anyway.

"Hey buddy," Puffy said a while after he'd finished his duck. "I'm going to go grab a glass of water from the kitchen. Do you want anything? Juice maybe?"

"I'm fine," Ghostbur replied.

She nodded and got to her feet. She didn't groan as much getting up from the ground as she had at Kurtis and Deedee's. She was still quite young, still technically a hero trainee if Ghostbur remembered correctly.

Ghostbur almost instantly abandoned the coloring when she left the room. The pictures would be a good way to add color to Techno's new room, but they weren't the most important things. Technoblade would need comfy clothes and blankets.

Ghostbur already knew where all of his clothes were, so easily was able to pick out a nice comfy sweater, a pair of soft shorts with an elastic waistband, and some nice socks with little pigs on them. Most of Wilbur's clothes would be too big on Techno since he would be 6 now whereas Ghostbur was 8, but it would do until Dad could buy him some stuff in his size. He wouldn't have to keep wearing whatever the fighting rings had put him in.

Then, he needed to find blankets. Ghostbur knew vaguely that there were plenty of blankets in the house. They all came out in the winter months, but it was currently August, so all but the favorites were put away.

He used the desk chair to peak at the shelf at top of his closet and found some of the nice fluffy blankets along with bedsheets (unfortunately, these were twin sized and the guest room had a full sized bed so they wouldn't work on Techno's new bed). He pulled down the blankets and sorted them by type and texture. He felt he was missing the nicest blankets, so pulled the chair into the hallway to look in the hall closet. He found a few more there and sorted them into the piles in his room before putting the desk chair back.

Techno would need a warm one, a soft one, and a fun one but Ghostbur would let him decide which ones he liked best.

He'd been too busy with his task of blanket sorting to hear the front door opening downstairs, so Ghostbur was surprised when he heard his dad calling up the steps.

"Wilbur," he called. "Could you come here for a minute? I have someone I want you to meet."

And that was all that Ghostbur needed to hear to get him running as fast as he could. Unfortunately, he was not perfectly used to steering his body, so he ended up more stumbling than running down the staircase, but he couldn't seem to care. Dad grabbed him, slowing him down before he could truly fall.

“Hey, Will, we have a guest,” Dad said, which was silly because they certainly did not have a *guest*. He glanced over at the small boy standing partially behind Dad almost like he was trying to hide. Oh gosh, he was so tiny. Finally, he was as small compared to Wilbur as he should be. Two whole years younger. He was just a *baby* and now he looked the part.

“This is Technoblade,” Dad said. “He’s going to be staying with us for a bit.” Then Dad glanced slightly behind himself at Techno. “Technoblade, this is Wilbur.”

Oh, Ghostbur thought, swallowing, an introduction. It had come far too late and far too early, but there it was. “Hi Techno,” he said, meeting his eyes with a smile. “I’m your new big brother.”

It took half a second for the words to register, but then Techno looked aghast. “No.” The horror was apparent on his face. It was kind of funny. “Absolutely not. We are not doing that.”

“Wilbur, Techno is just staying with us for a bit,” Dad lied. “He’s not your big brother.”

“Mmmm too late,” Ghostbur said, and oh how much of an understatement that was. “He’s my baby brother now.”

“No. That is not happening. Don’t call me that ever again.”

Oh, silly Technoblade. So silly. So just like a living person. “Baby brother Technoblade!” Ghostbur sang smugly. He knew he was right.

“Phil,” Techno said, turning his eyes on Dad.

“Wilbur,” Dad said, his tone scolding, but Ghostbur chose to ignore that.

“I’m going to go put all of my best blankets in his new room,” Ghostbur proclaimed, running off before he could be stopped.

Instead of going to his room, he turned to the guest room across the hallway which, by default, would be Techno’s new room. The room was mostly set up furniture wise, but the comforter was an icy beige. Luckily extra sheets were at the top of the room’s closet just like in Ghostbur’s room.

Ghostbur pulled out all of the extra sheets and found one extra comforter that was green. It was still boring, but it was better than beige, so that would have to do. He found the most fun old sheets he could find, which were still just solid colors, but he mixed and matched so the fitted sheet was blue and the normal sheet was orange.

He then set upon the task of stripping and remaking the bed. Getting the fitted sheet on was harder than he’d thought it would be, but he managed it after a couple of tries. He swapped out the pillowcases with one blue and one orange pillowcase and stacked them at the top of the bed.

Once that was done, he started dragging the boxes that had been stored in Techno’s closet into the hallway, so he’d have plenty of room to hang his new clothes. Then, as promised, he transferred all of the blanket piles from his room to Techno’s so Techno could get a good look at them. He also grabbed the drawings he’d done earlier and wrote welcoming things to Techno on them even though Ghostbur knew he couldn’t read them.

He was just transferring the last pile of blankets across the hall (he’d gotten a bit tripped up by stepping on the end of one), when soft footsteps ascended the stairs.

“What are you doing?” Technoblade asked.

“Getting you blankets,” Ghostbur replied. “I already said.”

“Right.”

Ghostbur managed to detangle his legs from the blankets finally and made the final push to haul them to Techno’s room.

He dropped them all and then glanced back at Technoblade who was staring at him from the hallway.

“Where’s Dad?” Ghostbur asked.

“Phil is paying Puffy for babysitting,” Techno said. “It was suggested I come upstairs and see what you were doing. You were making noise.”

“Yeah, well, I was setting up your new room!” Ghostbur threw out his arms at the space.

Techno glanced around the room and then nudged one of the nearest blanket piles. “Is it customary to cover the carpet in houses with blankets?”

“No silly, but you need a blanket, and I didn’t know what you’d like so I got them all out to show you.”

“I see.”

“Come on,” Ghostbur said. “Come pick!”

Techno looked at the blanket he’d kicked. “This one’s fine.”

“No!” Ghostbur whined. “You have to try them all and you have to pick one from each pile!”

Techno pointed again at the blanket at his feet. “This one.”

Ghostbur put his hands on his hips. “I went through all the work to get them down from the closets,” he said. “You have to pick properly.”

Technoblade just stared at him for a bit. “And how do I pick ‘properly’ exactly?” he asked.

“You have to touch them all,” Ghostbur explained. “Then take one from each pile. That’s the soft pile next to you, but there’s also a pile of ones that are heavy and warm and a pile of ones with fun designs.”

Techno took all of this information in with a grimace on his face.

“Please?” Ghostbur said.

Techno sighed, sounding 3 times his age... er, 3 times his *actual* age, not... 18. However, he did lean down and start touching all of the blankets. Pleased, Ghostbur watched him, pointing out the pros and cons of each blanket when he remembered something about them.

Eventually, Techno deposited 3 different blankets on the bed next to where Ghostbur now sat crisscrossed on it.

“There,” he said. “Are you happy now?”

“Yep,” Ghostbur replied. He hopped up off the bed. “At least about the blankets. There’s a few more necessities we should get from my room. Here, I’ll show you.”

He reached out intending to take Technoblade’s hand, but the boy flinched away the second he saw it approaching, actually taking a step back.

Ghostbur could tell it wasn’t a fully conscious decision to pull away by the look in his eyes, and he seemed to regret it a moment afterwards.

Right. Ghostbur had forgotten in his excitement how... twitchy Techno could be about physical contact. Most people in the future either knew his boundaries very well or didn’t dare try to touch him, so it hadn’t come up in a while. There also seemed to be something different about it today. Ghostbur studied him with sharp eyes. It was partly muscle memory, he postulated, and not of a 20-year-old soldier. It was the muscle memory of a 6-year-old that had died multiple times in a fighting ring the night before.

Ghostbur’s hand was still out in the air between them, and he watched as Techno squared his jaw and reached out to take it. This time, Ghostbur was the one to pull away.

“I don’t want you to touch me if it makes you feel bad,” Ghostbur said. Techno blinked at him. His hand was now the one raised awkwardly. “You can just,” he shrugged, “follow me to my room.”

“Yeah,” Techno said. “Alright.”

So, Ghostbur led him across the hallway to his own room. “This is my room,” he said, though he was sure that was clear. “If you ever need anything, you can come get me. Even if my door is closed, you can just knock. Even if it’s in the middle of the night.” He said it seriously, but Techno seemed slightly amused by his words.

“Yeah sure.”

Ghostbur walked into his room and found the pile of clothes he’d made earlier. “I picked you out some clothes you can change into. They might be a bit big, but they’re soft and clean. Dad will get you some better ones later.”

“Thank you,” Technoblade said, taking them.

“And, um,” Ghostbur said, trying to remember all of the things human children needed. “There are extra toothbrushes under the sink in the hall bathroom which is the door next to my room. Uh, you can use any of my soaps and shampoos. There are towels in the bathroom closet too. You can just grab one when you need it.”

“Okay.”

“Your room is kind of bland right now, so I thought you could take the light up globe on my desk and I made you a couple of pictures.” Ghostbur put the train picture on top of the clothing pile in Techno’s arms. “This is a train,” he said. “I wrote ‘Welcome home Technoblade’ on it,” he pointed to the words as he said them. Then he put the duck picture on top. “This is a duck. It says ‘To Techno’ on it.”

“Er... thanks,” Techno said, staring at the pictures. “That was nice of you.”

“And... um. I feel like I’m forgetting something.”

“This is plenty,” Technoblade said.

“No, no,” Ghostbur waved him off. “There’s something else and it’s *really* important.” He frowned and glanced around his room for a clue. He found it instantly. He gasped, surprised at himself. “You need a stuffed animal!” He needed, in fact, a very specific stuffed animal.

Ghostbur went over to the pile of stuffed animals in the corner of his room. He was pretty sure they were technically supposed to go in the toy chest, but Ghostbur had never put them in that.

He started searching through the pile. “What’s your favorite animal?”

“I don’t have a favorite animal.”

Ghostbur just looked at him with an unamused expression on his face. It made Techno grin slightly. “I don’t,” he said, “and that isn’t necessary.”

“Yes it is,” Ghostbur said, tossing various stuffed animals over his shoulder.

“It’s really not.”

Finally, Ghostbur saw a flash of bright white and grabbed at it victoriously. “Perfect!” he proclaimed, turning to Techno. “It matches your hair.” He jumped up and held the stuffed polar bear out. “Look.”

Techno was frozen, eyes locked on the stuffed animal for a good while before speaking.

“This... is yours?” he asked slowly.

“It was,” Ghostbur said, “but now it’s yours. I’m giving it to you.”

“I...” His eyes looked away from the stuffed animal to meet Wilbur’s gaze. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome,” Ghostbur said. Techno’s hand trembled just slightly when he reached out to take it. An emotion struck Ghostbur as the plushie changed hands from Ghostbur to Technoblade properly this time. It kind of felt like being stabbed again. “You should name him,” Ghostbur said to distract himself.

“Steve,” Techno said instantly.

Ghostbur tilted his head. “That was... a quick answer.” Had Techno named him before but just never said it out loud? That was cute! “Well,” Ghostbur said. “I hope you like Steve.”

Technoblade nodded. “Right, I, thank you. Wilbur.”

Wilbur. His discomfort with the name referring to him as he was now, was less when it came from Techno’s mouth, maybe because the only Wilbur Techno had ever known was already dead.

“I’ll grab the globe,” Ghostbur said. “Then we can finish getting you settled.”

Chapter End Notes

Meanwhile Downstairs:



[from Imgflip Meme Generator](#)

The Coffee Incident

Chapter Notes

If reading on mobile, you may want to read this in landscape.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Phil,” Technoblade said, the plaintive note to his voice sounding much sillier in a child’s voice than in a man’s, “if you don’t get me coffee, I’m going to go on another murder spree.”

Phil sent him a glare across the kitchen table. Luckily, Wilbur did not seem concerned about the ‘another’ part of that statement; he didn’t even seem to register it. It was amusing (in an aggravating way) that the actual child was acting more mature than the not-child this morning. (And every morning, Phil had come to observe in the last two weeks.) Wilbur was happily chomping on a piece of jam covered toast having already finished his entire vegetable filled omelet and the side of grapes.

“Technoblade,” Phil reasoned. “You are 6. Six-year-olds don’t drink coffee.”

“Yes,” Techno replied, poking at his untouched omelet with a butter knife, “but this 6-year-old is a *very* nontypical one, and if it’s going to make it through the day, it needs more energy than this body is willing to provide.”

“You have low energy because you’re malnourished,” Phil said. “You need a consistent and healthy diet, not coffee.”

Techno sighed, pushing the plate away slightly to put his crossed arms on the table.

“You can have some of my apple juice if you want,” Wilbur suggested cheerfully.

Techno settled his cheek on his arm, so he was facing Wilbur. “Thank you, Wilbur,” he said. “You have no concept of why that isn’t helpful, but I appreciate the effort.”

“It has sugar,” Wilbur said. “I thought if you can’t have caffeine, it could be a reasonable compromise.”

“Wow, Phil, at least your child *tries* to be reasonable.”

“Fine,” Phil said. “Fine. You want a compromise? I’ll let you have one *small* cup of coffee, if you at least eat some of the omelet.”

Technoblade groaned.

“Please. The nutritionist put you on a strict diet.”

“It has vegetables in it,” Techno grouched.

“Techno, please.”

“Veggies are good,” Wilbur piped up, “and they make you grow up big and strong.”

Techno groaned again.

“Should I start the coffee machine or not?” Phil asked.

“Ugh.” Techno picked himself up off the table and pulled the plate closer to him. “Fine.”

Phil rolled his eyes but stood up to start brewing the coffee.

“Do you like that shirt?” Wilbur’s voice asked behind him.

“Yes, Wilbur, I like the shirt,” Techno said, bored with the question as Wilbur, for some unknown reason, made sure to clarify this every morning.

Phil had thought at first it was because Wilbur was conscious of the fact that the clothes Techno kept borrowing from him didn’t quite fit right. In fact, Wilbur had bugged Phil constantly for a week about going to the mall to buy Techno his own things. Phil, however, had not felt comfortable having him out in public for at least 48 hours after his death date.

Well, honestly, he still hadn’t felt comfortable about it, but the thing about that gift called life is it did have to eventually move forward. Phil was...trying his best to remember that.

“Are you sure?” Wilbur asked, “because you should always only wear things you like.”

“I am sure, Wilbur.”

Even after the shopping trip though, Wilbur still asked about Techno’s clothes every day. Neither Phil nor Techno could figure out why he’d fixated on that, but it seemed harmless enough. Techno had decided to tolerate the behavior which Phil was grateful for.

Really, Phil had expected there to be less tolerance between the two of them overall, but the anticipated jealousy from Wilbur was nowhere to be found. Wilbur was the opposite of jealous of Techno, in fact. He was almost too clingy when it came to Technoblade. This had been a different thing to worry about as Techno did like his space and had no experience with small children. He seemed to take Wilbur with a grain of salt however, not getting more than passably irritated by the attention. It helped that Wilbur could easily be distracted into clinging to Phil which Phil never was upset about.

“And the pants?”

“The entire outfit is good, Wilbur,” Techno said. “I’m even wearing the fish socks you picked out for me, see?”

This seemed to satisfy Wilbur. “They’re cute!” he said, tone excited rather than oddly seriously concerned as it had been a moment before.

“Yep,” Techno replied.

Phil returned to the table then, the sound of the coffee maker starting to do its job in his ears. Techno had eaten half of his omelet thankfully.

“I’m going to file the final bit of paperwork today,” Phil told him.

Technoblade grunted through a mouthful of grapes, making his displeasure about the situation known once again.

“I know,” Phil said, resisting rolling his eyes. It had been an oddly soft spot for Technoblade when they’d discussed it, “but me legally adopting you really is the most secure option.”

Another grunt.

“Unless you want to risk going into foster care.” The fact of the matter was, Techno was physically 6. If he’d been 16, maybe even 15, they would have tried to get him emancipated minor paperwork, but the only real option for a 6-year-old was being adopted by an adult. As the only adult who knew he was actually 20, Phil was the best (only) option. Techno still didn’t seem to like the idea, though he’d had trouble articulating why to Phil.

There was a third grunt from Techno, but this one was more assenting.

“I still think you should rename him Jeremy,” Wilbur cut in, effectively cutting the tension that had built up during the adoption ‘conversation.’

“No,” Techno said firmly through a mouthful of food.

“Wilbur,” Phil said patiently, “once again, Technoblade is not a cat. You cannot just rename him.”

“I’m just saying,” Wilbur said, kicking his feet, “making his legal name more common would make the courts less suspicious.”

Phil studied his child for a moment and then turned to Technoblade, lips pursed. “Technoblade, why does my child seem to be under the impression we are illegally adopting you?”

Techno just shrugged.

Phil turned back to Wilbur. “Techno says funny things sometimes,” he said, “but the way we are adopting him is 100% legal and there is nothing weird about it.”

Wilbur took a sip of his apple juice. “Okay Dad,” he said.

If he was not an 8-year-old, Phil would have taken his tone as a condescending one. As it was, he wasn’t sure.

The coffee machine beeped then and, considering Techno had made good progress on his breakfast, Phil did reluctantly get up to get him a cup. He grabbed a miniature sized mug he remembered getting at a skating event with a 4–5-year-old Wilbur. It had originally held about 6 ounces of hot chocolate, but today, Phil supposed, it would hold coffee.

He went into the refrigerator to get some almond milk since Technoblade liked it in his coffee and it meant there would be less room for coffee in the mug, but then paused. He recalled one of the tips from the nutritionist was to add nutrient dense food to what Techno was already eating (or drinking in this case). One of the example suggestions was adding butter to bread before making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Phil wasn’t sure if Techno had ever had a peanut butter and jelly sandwich in his life (physically or mentally), but the same principle should apply to coffee. In fact, Phil knew for a fact putting butter in coffee was common in some cultures.

So, instead of almond milk, Phil dropped half a tablespoon of butter in the coffee.

Technoblade, having already seen what he'd done, glared at him as he set it on the table. "*What* is this?"

"It's butter coffee."

"*Butter* coffee is not what we agreed upon."

Phil crossed his arms. "If you are putting coffee in your malnourished *6-year-old* body, you are going to get some nutrition from it."

"This is an affront to nature," Techno said.

"It is just a bit of butter."

"It's disgusting is what it is."

"Plenty of people do it," Phil reasoned. "At least try it before deciding you hate it."

"I don't need to try it," Techno insisted, looking exactly his age. "I already know it tastes bad."

"Here! I'll be an impartial party and taste it for you!" Wilbur offered, and then he leaned over in his chair, stuck out his tongue, and dipped it fully into the coffee mug.

Techno watched him sit back up with open mouthed horror.

Wilbur smacked his lips a few times. "I like it!" he declared.

Techno slowly turned to Phil, eyes pleading for help and explanation. Phil, however, could not help him in that moment. He had both of his hands over his mouth, trying desperately not to cackle at his child's innocent antics.

When it was clear Phil was in no state to provide aid, Techno looked back at the coffee mug. He slid it across the table towards Wilbur, a shell-shocked expression on his face. "You can have it."

"Ooo yay!"

"No he," Phil started, but cut himself off, choking on laughter. "He can't... he can't have that. He's *eight*."

"It's too late, Phil," Techno said, and indeed it was. Wilbur had taken the largest gulp of coffee Phil had ever seen, mostly emptying the, admittedly rather small, mug.

Phil made the executive decision to give up on parenting for the moment, both of his actual child and the 20-year-old. He flopped down into his chair with defeated laughter. "Just go get yourself the rest of the coffee, Technoblade."



[from Imgflip Meme Generator](#)



[from Imgflip Meme Generator](#)

Poor Technoblade has no idea how gross little?big? siblings can be.

The coffee incident is probably my favorite incident in Two Steps Back. I have no idea if anyone else finds it as funny, but I love it.

Lies

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Techno sighed, running his hand through the short hairs on his head. He had maybe an inch of it now after almost a month being back, and it was growing in unevenly. Areas of his head had originally still had cuts on it from his body's last "hair cut" and those areas were growing hair slower. He frowned at his own face in the mirror. It was a new mirror, one Phil had bought for him when they'd redesigned the once guest room into a true room. It was a smaller mirror with a golden trim that sat on his new dresser since he'd not liked any of the dressers with built in mirrors.

"Are you alright?" Wilbur's voice startled him. Apparently, he hadn't remembered to close his bedroom door behind him, and now Wilbur was hovering outside of it with a curious expression on his face.

"I'm fine," Techno said.

Wilbur studied him closely, head tilting to the right at the exact angle Phil's always did when Techno lied about his mental state to him. However, unlike Phil, Wilbur didn't drop it. "Is it your hair?"

Techno stared at him, surprised by the accurate guess.

Wilbur gave him a rueful smile. "You ran your hand through it and sighed," he said. "It's not a big jump."

"It's nothing," Techno said.

Wilbur raised an eyebrow.

"Really," Techno said. "It's just short right now, and I prefer it long."

"Oh," Wilbur said. "That makes sense."

"It does?" Techno asked. He honestly felt pretty silly about how uncomfortable his short hair made him. Wilbur didn't even have the context as to why he wouldn't want short hair.

"Sure. If you like long hair better, having it short must suck."

"Yeah... it just doesn't look like me," Techno said. Nothing about him looked like him right now, but for some reason, the hair was the one that made his stomach clench when thinking about it. "And there isn't anything I can do about it except wait."

Wilbur hummed. "Well, there isn't anything we can do about the length, but if the problem is it doesn't feel like you, we could do something about that."

"And how exactly would we do that?"

Wilbur smiled widely at him. "What's your favorite color?"

~~~~~

And that is how they ended up at the nearest CVS.

Techno wondered if Phil would be mad at him for allowing Wilbur out of the house without notifying him first. To be fair, Techno hadn't exactly figured out what was happening until it was too late. Wilbur had led him down the stairs and then dragged him towards the backdoor. He'd been uncharacteristically quiet, and Techno was usually quiet, so they'd made almost no sound leaving the house. Phil had been in the front room, so they hadn't crossed his path.

Techno hadn't realized they were sneaking out until they were already a block away. When Techno had brought up the fact that they probably should have told Phil they were leaving, Wilbur had shrugged.

"This isn't about him," Wilbur had pointed out. Which was... true Techno supposed. Still, Phil was a bit touchy about Wilbur leaving the house with him let alone without him. Oh well, Techno *was* an adult. This was just... babysitting. Without the parent's permission, but still.

So, now they were in the hair supplies section of a CVS. In particular, they were standing in front of the shelf of hair dye. There was a limited supply of dyes, but they managed to touch on all sections of the color wheel well enough. There was a solid selection of natural colors like brown, blond, and darker red in a few shades. There was also a selection of every unnatural color Techno could think of, but there was only one or two shades of each.

"So," Wilbur said. "You never answered what your favorite color was. What do you think? Would you prefer a more natural shade? You could dye your hair brown like mine. This one's close enough to my shade," he tapped at one of the browns. "Or you could go blonde like Dad." He paused and seemed to consider it for a moment. "That might be a bit close to white though, so I'm not sure if you want that. Or, do you want something more artificial like the colorful ones?"

"Uh," Techno said, hesitantly. "I guess maybe colorful?"

"Good choice," Wilbur replied cheerfully. "Hmm... so..."

"Can I help you boys," a voice suddenly interrupted. It sounded irritated and a bit accusing.

Techno looked over at the store employee staring at them in clear suspicion and froze, completely unsure what to say. Wilbur, however, turned to the woman instantly, a large, unfamiliar, smile on his face.

"Oh no thank you," he replied. "We're just looking at the hair dyes. I have a project for the Fox Scouts!"

"Oh really?" she asked. Some of her skepticism seemed to fade from her tone as she looked at his bright eyes.

"Yeah!" Wilbur confirmed. "We're doing posters about different hair colors. We're looking at which ones are natural, which ones come from powers, and which ones are art...arta..." he frowned briefly squinting his eyes before the smile came back, "artisanal. So, my daddy said I could come down and look at the hair colors on display as long as I took my little brother." He pointed at Techno. Techno was too stunned to protest the title. "He even gave me a whole \$5 to spend on candy! I want Twizzlers, but my brother wants Three Musketeers because he likes chocolate, but I like fruity things. Do you like fruity things or chocolate things more, Miss?"

"I... uh, like both?" the woman said, now with a polite, disinterested smile instead of a scowl.

“That’s what Dad always says,” Wilbur said, his tone annoyingly high pitched. “And then he always gets Smarties and then no one is happy.”

“Ah well...”

“But today I have the money,” Wilbur said. “So, there will be no Smarties and...”

She cut him off then, already taking a step away. “That’s very nice,” she said. “It sounds like you have a lot to think about. I’ll leave you to it.”

Like someone had flipped a switch, the large smile dropped off of Wilbur’s face the second the woman turned the corner. “So, you were saying you’d like a more unnatural color?”

Techno could help but stare at him blankly for a moment. “You... you just *lied*.”

Wilbur turned his head towards Techno with what could only be described as a smirk on his face. “Yes, Technoblade, people do that sometimes.”

“But... but *you*?”

Wilbur was supposed to be Phil innocent, silly son. There was nothing innocent in the wink Wilbur sent him though.

“Come on,” he urged, “pick a color.”

Still feeling off kilter, Techno turned to the shelf full of hair dye. If he was truly going to commit to this, the color needed to be one that stood out, one that was a clear deliberate choice, otherwise there wasn’t a point to this exercise of self-expression.

His eyes drifted over a light blue to settle on a vivid pink. It was the only pink on the shelf and was objectively ugly. He recalled Niki’s hair had had a bit of faded pink in it when they’d first met. Techno pointed to it.

“That one?” Wilbur confirmed.

Techno nodded and Wilbur plucked the box off the shelf. He then opened the box, took out the contents, and shoved them up his shirt.

“What are you doing?” Techno asked, alarmed.

Before speaking, Wilbur carefully arranged the hair dye box contents, so they were held snugly by the waistband of his jeans and the fabric of his shirt completely obscured them from view.

“Technoblade, we are 6 and 8,” he reasoned, putting the box back on the shelf, but at the back of the line of pink hair dyes. “The cashier is not going to sell us pink hair dye.”

“So, you’re just going to steal it?”

Wilbur glanced at him, an eyebrow raised. “Yes.”

Technoblade stared at him dumbly for a moment.

“It’s not the worst crime someone could commit.”

And Techno... supposed that was true. Considering the multiple homicides he himself had once committed and then all of the acts designated “terrorism” by the heroes, what was stealing some cheap hair dye?

Except, well, Wilbur was Phil’s 8-year-old *child*.

“Come on, let’s go buy some chocolate, so the worker isn’t suspicious.” Wilbur turned on his heel and wandered down the aisle towards the front. Techno followed helplessly. He should... probably do something. He was the adult even if he didn’t look like it. Should he really just let Phil’s kid steal hair dye?

“You can pick the candy,” Wilbur said and oh, they were in line at the cash register now. The employee who had interrogated them earlier was now checking out another customer not two feet away from them. “I actually don’t care what we get.”

“Uh,” Techno said. He glanced at the candy selection and pointed at a Crunch Bar.

Wilbur’s eyes lit up. “Great choice!” he enthused. He grabbed one, glanced at the price, and then grabbed a small pack of bubblegum as well. The person ahead of them finished checking out and took their bags.

Wilbur slapped down a \$5 bill (Techno wondered where he’d gotten that) and the two packages of candy with more gusto than required. “These ones please!” he said, the same weird smile from earlier on his face again.

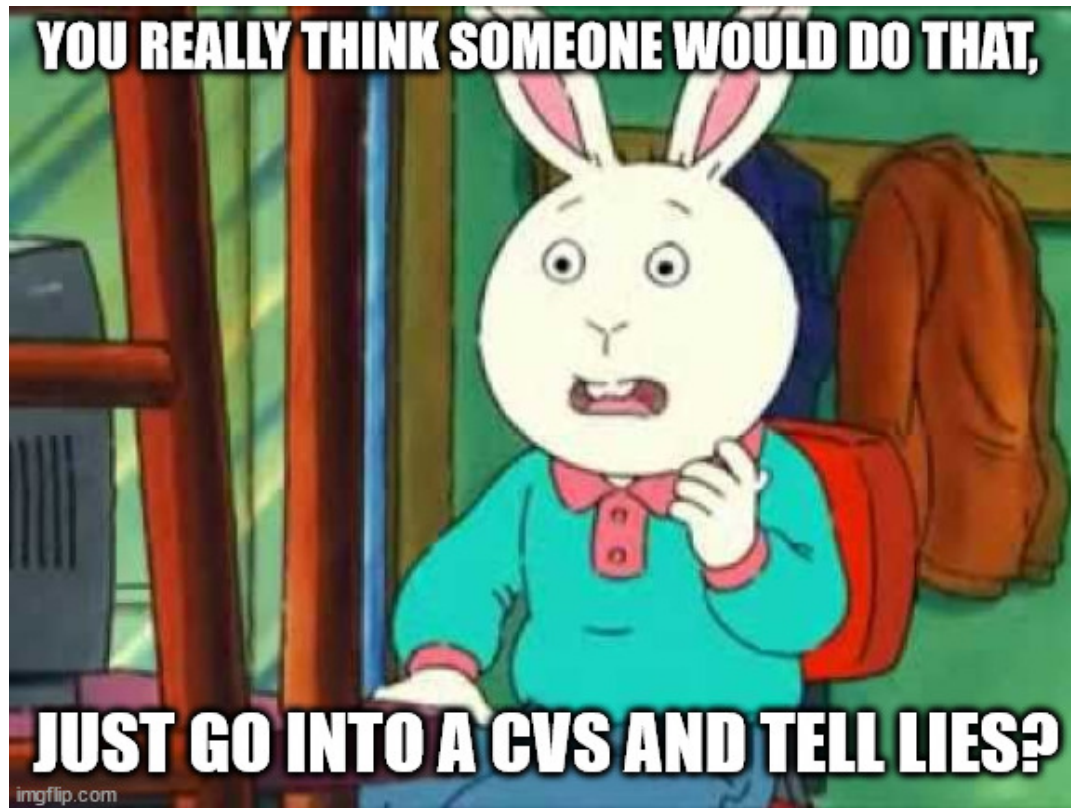
“Done looking at the hair dyes?” the employee asked. She did not sound suspicious at all. Was that a good or a bad thing? Techno was unsure.

“Yep!” Wilbur replied, and then started blathering on about the imaginary project. Techno didn’t bother to track what he said, and instead kept his head down. Wilbur spoke the whole time the cashier checked them out; she basically shoved them out the door after bagging their items.

Wilbur swung the bag back and forth as they exited the store, a genuine smile on his face now that they were out of sight.

Phil was going to kill him.

## Chapter End Notes



[from Imgflip Meme Generator](#)

# Clutching Sand and Holding Water

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Do you know what you’re doing?” Techno asked as Ghostbur lined up all the contents of the pink hair dye box as well as other various supplies like a timer and towels on the bathroom counter.

“Yes, Technoblade,” Ghostbur said, flicking the folded up sheet of instructions from the box with his index finger. It slid off the counter and onto the floor “I know exactly what I’m doing.”

Techno still looked dubious, but Ghostbur was not lying. He’d already dyed his white streak with brown hair dye twice. He did not mention that to Techno.

Instead, he just rolled his eyes at Techno’s leery frown. “Silly,” he accused.

“I’m not ‘silly,’” Techno said, sounding hilariously unamused. “You are planning to put chemicals into my hair.”

“Yeah,” Ghostbur said, “Chemicals they sell at a *CVS*. It’s not like it’s hexachlorocyclopentadiene.”

“...*What is that?*”

Ghostbur shrugged. “It’s the first chemical I could think of.”

“There’s no way that’s a real word.”

“It is so,” Ghostbur insisted, “and it’s not in your hair dye.” He pretended to read the back of the box where the ingredients were listed. Then he held it out to Techno with a grin. “See?” he said.

Techno just glared. “You know I can’t read.”

“Oh well,” Ghostbur said, throwing the box over his shoulder. He heard it hit the side of the bathtub. “Guess you’ll have to trust me.”

Techno grumbled.

“It’s *fine*,” Ghostbur insisted, waving his hand dismissively. “People dye their hair all the time, and I know all the steps. Speaking of, first step, you need clean hair. If you want, you can hop in the shower and wash your hair yourself or,” (He was careful to keep his face neutral as he gave the options.) “I could wash it for you in the sink. It’s less moving around that way.”

Techno hesitated and Ghostbur waited patiently even though he felt fit to burst with excitement at the prospect. Ghostbur, in truth, had been angling for this for weeks. Techno had always been tetchy about people touching him. The amount of caginess had only grown larger when he’d gotten smaller. He only tolerated touch from people he really liked and trusted and even with those people he only wanted it in certain circumstances.

At the same time, since his hair was short, he hadn’t been getting it braided by dad almost every morning. Ghostbur could tell he was missing it. (Not having enough hair for Dad to braid was almost certainly one of the problems he had with his currently short hair; not that Techno was consciously aware of that fact.)

Ghostbur had been working to show Techno he was worthy of trust. He'd been careful not to invade his space or touch him without permission. He'd been walking the tightrope between spending enough time around Techno so Techno would get to know him without annoying the introvert (a difficult tightrope to walk for Ghostbur's first new social interaction). He certainly wasn't to Dad levels of Techno Trust yet, but he thought just maybe Techno would be willing to let Ghostbur touch his hair without it being a practical necessity (and without the gloves that would be required when actually dyeing his hair.)

"You can wash it," Techno finally said. He kept his tone causally neutral almost like he was imitating the way Ghostbur had asked the question.

"Okay!" Ghostbur said, some of his enthusiasm leaking into his voice. "What kind of shampoo do you want me to use? We'll use the conditioner that comes with the hair dye, but you can pick the shampoo. I've got strawberry, orange, and cucumber melon open in my shower."

"Why do you have three types of shampoo at once?"

"Because they smell good," Ghostbur said with a smile, "and I want a variety to choose from!"

"That sort of thing is the reason it takes you two hours to shower every morning."

Ghostbur continued to smile at him. It was, decidedly, not the reason.

"Let's do the strawberry," Techno decided on. "It seems on theme."

"It does!" Ghostbur enthused. "I'll grab it. You get comfortable in the chair."

He heard Techno move to sit as he turned to reach into the shower and grab the  $\frac{3}{4}$  full bottle of strawberry shampoo.

He couldn't help but grin when he turned back towards the sink. Techno's feet didn't even come close to hitting the floor when seated on their chair they'd chosen, but if they'd picked a shorter one, his head wouldn't have reached the sink.

Ghostbur, of course, had a bit of a height challenge too. He needed to stand on a step stool to get into the proper hair washing position. "I promise not to get shampoo in your eyes," Ghostbur said, "but I brought you a rag just in case." He hung said washrag over Techno's nose.

"Well, I'm not sure if I can trust you, so I appreciate it," Techno said, reaching up to grab it. He was mostly teasing though, so Ghostbur just squinted at him for a moment before sticking out his tongue.

One corner of Techno's mouth quirked up just barely in one of the rarer Technoblade Expressions. Ghostbur did not recall seeing that expression in the times before (and even though some things had started getting... hazy lately, Ghostbur didn't think he'd forget a Technoblade Expression that easily.) Identifying it was harder when he couldn't study it from every angle. He thought it might be blooming fondness, but that may have been wistful thinking. He'd only ever seen it directed at himself.

Distracted by his musings, he reached forward without thinking to turn on the water.

The faucet sputtered, a bit of air stuck in the pipes causing water to spray up and



hit the skin on the back of the hand

fracturing into uncountable little parts

cold at first,

they pooled together into droplets and

they agitated the still unfamiliar nerve endings

as they, bending to some unseeable force of nature, moved

and left streaks down the arm

in branching paths; they left parts of themselves behind.

“Wilbur?”

‘Wilbur,’ he thought: the name that no longer described him. The ghost of that name had haunted him for years just as intensely as he’d haunted his father. Even now, pressed back into the flesh that had been given that name, it felt odd.

With Dad, it was tinged with grief even now and the sound was suffocating. It was reductive. It felt like, well, like being locked back into a body that didn’t fit anymore. He could feel pieces of himself spilling out of the prison of that name.

He would never be Wilbur again, not the Wilbur Dad meant.

And yet, sometimes, when Techno said it, like he just had, it felt like something different. Maybe it was because Techno had never known another Wilbur or because there wasn’t heartbreak in his tone whenever he used the name, but the label never felt quite as wrong when he said it. Sometimes it even felt right, in those moments where pieces of himself drifted away and he... forgot. When he was half asleep near the end of a movie or was hyper focused on teaching Techno the string games he’d barely recalled from his real childhood, he forgot the entirety of himself, and suddenly the name didn’t seem so ill fitting.

He tried to hold onto those moments sometimes, but clutching onto ‘Wilbur’ was like clutching dry sand.

He wondered what that made him sometimes, because increasingly it felt like holding onto the not-Wilbur parts of himself was like trying to keep a grip on...

Water.

“I’m just waiting for the water to heat up,” he replied, moving his arm back through the now warming, steady stream.

He had clearly paused for too long because Techno was eyeing him, but he chose to ignore it in favor of grabbing the shampoo.

“Lean back,” he said.

Techno did, careful to make sure all of his hair got into the sink.

He took the moment to forcibly pump air back into his lungs. He wanted to be in this moment. Technoblade was trusting him with his *hair*. Not just to wash it, but to dye it, to help him reclaim the control over it he’d lost by it being short. This was important.

He was exceedingly careful as he wetted Techno’s hair. Despite how short the hair was, he could still run his fingers through it.

Techno was not as tense as he’d been the first time Dad had cared for his hair, but there were echoes of that distrustful strain in his posture, especially as fingers swept carefully over almost fully healed scarring.

“I’m going to put shampoo in it now.”

Even though Techno had the rag, he was still very careful not to get soap anywhere near the boy’s eyes. He scrubbed thoroughly, but gently.

“Your hair’s soft,” Wilbur told him as he began to wash the suds out, “we should have dad get you some good hair products to keep it healthy as it grows out.”

Techno just hummed what was probably agreement.

He reached for the dye bottle then, recalling the instructions about how to put it in. He was coloring more hair at once than he had before, but it wasn’t that different. In fact, it was easier on someone else’s hair than on his own.

They set the timer for 30 minutes.

It was only then that Ghostbur realized he’d forgotten about the gloves step of the instructions... oops. He washed his hands the best he could in the sink.

“The gloves were right next to the bottle!” Techno said when he realized what had happened.

Ghostbur just shrugged. “Now we’ll match!” he said.

“Phil’s going to kill me,” Techno groaned.

“He’s going to kill *both* of us,” Ghostbur corrected, making jazz hands with his very pink stained fingers.

“You seem way too happy about this.”

“You’ll be happy too once you see how great your hair turns out!”

“Unless you skipped another step in addition to the gloves,” Techno muttered darkly.

Ghostbur just bumped shoulders with him. It was something he hadn’t dared to do before, but Techno accepted the impromptu touch without even seeming to notice. “Now show me that new game Dad

got you while we wait.” Ghostbur had insisted they bring the new Nintendo DS into the bathroom just for this purpose. “I can read the text pop ups for you.”

Techno agreed and they sat on the side of the bathtub playing the video game for the 30 minutes it took the dye to set. Ghostbur carefully washed it out and conditioned it. He wouldn’t let Techno look at it yet though. Instead, he grabbed the hairdryer he’d stolen from Dad’s bathroom weeks ago (he never seemed to need it).

Ghostbur had gotten good at blow drying his own hair out as letting it remain wet on his neck distracted him. Blow drying someone else’s hair was a bit different, and Techno ended up with a mouthful or two of his own hair before Ghostbur figured out the angle, but Techno’s hair also dried a lot faster than Ghostbur’s.

Yet, despite the quick efficiency, the sound of the hairdryer did, inevitably, draw notice.

There was a knock on the door when Ghostbur was just about done.

“Are you blow drying your hair?” Dad asked. “Again?”

“Um,” Ghostbur said, glancing at Techno who raised an eyebrow. “I am blow drying hair, yes.”

“Have you seen Techno?”

“Um,” said Ghostbur. “...No?”

Techno pursed his lips and whispered, “You can lie without blinking to a CVS worker, but not to Phil?”

“He’s my *dad*,” Ghostbur said at full volume.

“...Okay. 3 seconds until I come in there,” Dad said. “1.”

Ghostbur figured that Techno’s hair was dry enough. He unplugged the hair dryer.

“2.”

He combed through Techno’s hair one last time, fluffing it up so it looked perfect.

“3.”

The door opened and Ghostbur smiled innocently over at his dad.

Dad took in the scene. The sink was pink, Ghostbur’s hands were pink, there was a streak of pink on the counter and on Ghostbur’s sleeve from where he’d accidentally leaned an elbow on said streak of pink. Most importantly, Techno’s hair was pink.

“What is going on here?”

“What do you mean?” Ghostbur said, blinking up at Dad with faux innocence. “Technoblade always had pink hair.”

“It was his idea,” Techno said when Dad looked at him.

“Yes, it was!” Ghostbur said gleefully. “And it turned out great! See!” He grabbed Techno’s chair and spun it around, so he was facing the mirror.

Techno looked at himself and tilted his head with a Techno Expression Ghostbur knew very well. He was pleased.

Ghostbur glanced over at Dad who looked wholeheartedly exasperated. “Oh, *Wilbur*,” he said, his expression pinched.

And, for the first time since he had actually been Wilbur, the name from his dad’s lips did not feel entirely wrong.

## Chapter End Notes

Too sleepy to come up with a meme that makes sense.



[from Imgflip Meme Generator](#)

# The Driving Incident

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“But I don’t *want* to go back to school,” Wilbur pouted, poking his eggs with his spoon.

Phil felt his head pound, and it wasn’t just from the whining that had been steadily increasing in frequency (and pitch) the last week and a half. He was on his third cup of coffee after having barely slept the night before.

“Don’t you want to see all your friends?” Phil asked patiently. Negotiating with a small child was a forgotten skill for Phil, and Wilbur had always been a formable foe.

Wilbur just frowned. “Father, I don’t care about a bunch of 8-year-olds. I want to stay with Techno. Can’t I be homeschooled too?”

“You don’t need to be homeschooled,” Phil explained. Again. “Techno’s behind a bit, so he’s getting tutored for a semester. You don’t need any special schooling, so you’re going to regular school.”

Wilbur considered this argument. “What if I’m too advanced for regular school?”

“Your report card last year ended up with one C and the rest Bs.” Phil only knew this because the report card was still pinned onto the refrigerator. “Regular school is exactly where you need to be.”

“Maybe a lot of things changed this summer,” Wilbur insisted.

Wilbur had no idea just how many things had changed this summer.

“How about this,” Phil suggested. “You work really hard and get all As this semester, and next semester, I’ll let you go to the same school as Techno.”

Wilbur looked unimpressed. “That’s a trick,” he said. “Your plan is to have Techno go to regular school next semester.”

Wilbur was even more formable than Phil’s memory indicated. Phil set down his coffee and looked at his son seriously. “You are going to school.”

Wilbur pursed his lips for a moment, contemplating. “If I get all As this semester,” he finally said, “I want to go to the International Train Museum in Tretburn over winter vacation.”

“And that means you’ll go to regular school without complaining anymore?”

Wilbur nodded.

“Fine, deal,” Phil said immediately.

“Okay,” Wilbur said in a sing-song tone. “I’ll be planning my vacation between learning how to multiple 6 and 8 and reading chapter books.” He cheerfully finished shoveling his breakfast into his mouth.

“Will you get dressed now?” Phil asked. Wilbur had refused to get dressed before breakfast, because he had insisted he wasn’t going to school.

“Yep,” he replied easily, getting up and almost skipping upstairs.

“Thank god,” Phil said. “He finally dropped it.”

Techno gave him a doubtful look, hands around the one small cup of coffee he was allowed in the mornings. Techno expressions always looked hilarious on a 6-year-old’s face, but Phil did his best never to indicate he thought so. Despite his tiny hands, Techno could probably figure out a way to strangle him in his sleep.

“What?” Phil asked.

“Phil, I don’t know enough about the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to say this for sure, but I’m pretty sure you just got played.”

“Wilbur was solidly in the average student category from what I remember,” Phil said. He stared down at his breakfast. The scrambled eggs still on his plate made his stomach squeeze. “It’ll be a lot of work for him to get straight As.” Instead of forcing the rest of breakfast down, he gathered all of the plates and began scraping the scraps into the trash.

“Uh huh,” Techno said from behind him, “and if he manages it?”

“If he manages it, he’s done enough hard work to deserve a reward,” Phil said, glancing back at him. “I guess?”

Techno took another sip of his coffee. “You’re the one with parenting experience, Phil.”

Wilbur came down the steps a few minutes later, dressed in an outfit different than the one Phil had picked out for him and with a backpack slung casually over one arm. Phil felt something catch in his chest at the sight.

Wilbur had never attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. It was one of a million little milestones Phil would never get to see.

Or at least, that is what Phil had thought, what he had *known* for years. But there Wilbur was, no longer the same, unchanging image of a boy in Phil’s memories. He was already growing away from that child Phil had lost, though it was in such a small way that Phil’s eyes couldn’t see the differences yet. In less than 2 months, it would be his birthday. Who would a 9-year-old Wilbur be?

Would the images in his head, in his dreams, stay frozen at 8 even as the years passed? The Wilbur that had stood over him last night had still had the weeping wound in his stomach.

He had thought sleeping on Wilbur’s floor last would help the nightmares, but it had somehow made it worse.

“Uh...Phil?” Techno’s voice cut through the fog Phil hadn’t realized had settled over him. Techno had gotten up from the kitchen table at some point. His hand was gripping Phil’s forearm, steady despite its small size.

“Sorry,” Phil said, blinking down at him. “I’m fine. I just didn’t sleep well last night and must have zoned out.”

Techno looked up at him, obviously not believing him, but the words weren't for Techno's benefit anyway. When he looked up, Wilbur didn't seem to fully believe him either.

"Okay, Phil," Techno said. "Should we call Puffy to drive Wilbur to school?"

It was such an adult suggestion and tone from such a small body.

Phil shook himself. "No, I'm fine," Phil said, pulling away and reaching into the cupboard for a travel mug. "I'll just have a little more coffee and I'll be fine."

"...Far be it from me to criticize someone's caffeine intake," Techno said, "but, uh, are you sure?"

Phil had had moments like that before since waking up in this time, but it seemed his exhaustion this morning had made it worse. "Yes," he said, "I'm fine."

Wilbur approached then. He'd put his backpack down, and nothing inhibited him from squeezing his way under Phil's arm and wing. He looked amusingly like a baby kola clinging to him like that and looking at him with those wide brown eyes. Feeling him warm and alive next to him, let Phil shake off the remnants of memory and nightmare.

If Wilbur had asked in that moment, Phil probably would have let him stay home from school, but he did not. He stood there for a few minutes and let Phil press a kiss to the top of his head before pulling away.

"We should go, so I'm not late," Wilbur finally said, and Phil nodded. He quickly poured what was left in the coffee pot into his travel mug while Wilbur grabbed his backpack. Techno had his own backpack by the door which he would take to his private tutoring sessions in a building adjacent to the Hero Guild HQ.

He knew Techno was not happy about the booster seat he was forced to sit in, but he thankfully didn't complain about it this morning. Despite not having put Wilbur in a car since being back, he recalled the boy did not need one because of his height.

Phil still remembered the path to the elementary school easily enough even though he'd found himself avoiding it in the future.

It was a short drive, but Wilbur kept making noises in the back. Phil ignored him until he said quietly to Techno, "Maybe we *should* have called Puffy to drive us," he said.

"What?" Techno asked, confused. "Why?"

Wilbur paused. "You just about flew out of your booster seat at that stop sign," he said. Phil glanced back at them in the rearview mirror. Wilbur was frowning.

"Yeah," Techno says. "That always happens."

"...What do you mean that always happens?!" Wilbur shrieked. It made Phil's headache pound again, and he maybe, *maybe*, took a speedbump too fast. "This is not how driving works!"

"It's not?!" Techno asked.

"Dad, you can't drive?!"

"He can't drive?!"

“I can drive,” Phil said.

Wilbur screamed as they hit a little, tinny, tinny, bump. “You can’t drive! How did I not realize that before?!”

“I thought this was normal!” Techno said.

“I’m taking the bus from now on. I’m taking the bus! Let me out!”

“We’re already here,” Phil said, turning to frown back at him. He’d just pulled into the school drop off zone.

“Thank goodness,” Wilbur replied, shoving open the door. “I’ll see you two later. Don’t kill Techno on the way to the office.” He slammed the door closed behind him.

Well... that was not the expected goodbye for Wilbur’s first day back at school. Maybe it was for the best. He didn’t know if he’d have been able to handle something heartfelt after what happened early.


“What does he mean you can’t drive, Phil?” Techno asked.

Phil rolled his eyes. “I can drive,” he said, pulling out into traffic. “This is driving.”

He hit another of the speed bumps driving away from the school. “...I don’t know if I believe you.”

## Chapter End Notes

Phil: Okay, I had a nightmare about my kid dying again. I will go sleep on his floor so if it happens again, I can see he's fine when I wake up.

Ghostbur in the corner, not fully aware of what's going on with himself yet: 

Phil: Huh.





[from Imgflip Meme Generator](#)

# Ache

## Chapter Notes

Techno does make a suicide joke in here. I mean, it's not really a suicide joke because of how his whole thing works, but I thought I should mention it.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur was... bad for a headache.

He was full of energy, loud, and constantly on the move. He would chatter endlessly about any subject that popped into his head, and though he tried, he struggled to quiet down when it was requested of him.

Techno usually didn't mind. Wilbur was... good.

Techno would have tolerated him no matter his personality just because he was Phil's kid, but Techno had found he enjoyed the child's company.

There had been an image of Wilbur in Techno's head crafted from Phil's stories. Unlike Techno's mental image of Wilbur's physical appearance, in a lot of ways, the kid's personality matched Techno's preconceptions. He was excitable and a bit silly. He was quick to laugh and tried to make others laugh with him.

In many ways, he reminded Techno of Phil. Sometimes he would look at Techno and seem older than his years. He could be extremely gentle. He always seemed to notice if Techno felt uncomfortable and respected that. Considering 80% of the time he was a chaotic ball of energy who was clingier than most leeches, this was surprising. He also expressed affection in familiar ways. He liked to give Techno gifts for no reason and was almost obsessed with making sure Techno had everything he needed.

All of this was consistent with Techno's preconceived notions of who Wilbur was. It all made sense. It matched with the sweet, considerate, slightly goofy child Phil had described.

However, not *everything* fit.

Wilbur was little demon. Phil's grief had not preserved this fact in his memories, but Wilbur was a monster. Even now with Wilbur alive and in front of him, Phil sometimes just didn't comprehend what his child was. Wilbur was intelligent, much more than Phil gave him credit for, and he did not always use his brains for good.

Sometimes he'd get this little spark in his eyes and the right side of his lip would pull up, and Techno would know he was up to mischief. What mischief? Techno only sometimes was privy to that information. Most of the times Techno knew about were simple things like swiping a cookie Phil had told him he couldn't have before dinner (he would split this with Techno). But Techno had seen him in the CVS. He was capable of much more if he put his mind to it. Techno was convinced, he was putting his mind to it and not letting Techno know about it. It was a little terrifying.

Yet, honestly, that was part of the reason he enjoyed Wilbur's company. At least he wasn't boring. In fact, he was often surprisingly funny, especially when he was up to something. Techno liked spending time with him.

Usually.

"Would you *shut up* for one second," Techno snapped as Wilbur began blabbering once again after being asked to stop only a few moments before. Techno immediately winced at his own tone.

Wilbur wasn't doing anything wrong. He was being a child. Sure, he was being annoying, but not anymore than usual. On a better day, it would likely be endearing. Techno was an adult (despite his current size predicament); he shouldn't direct his own poor mood at an 8-year-old.

"Sorry," Techno said less than a second after snapping. He looked up at Wilbur, worried the child would have burst into tears or something. (Kids did that sometimes from what Techno understood). Wilbur, thankfully, didn't look particularly upset. "Sorry, you're not doing anything wrong. I didn't mean that. Sorry."

Wilbur raised one eyebrow, looking much closer to bemused than upset at Techno's outburst. "I'm not going to break because you snapped at me once, Techno," the boy said dryly. His expression softened then, much in the way Phil's sometimes did when Techno wasn't feeling great. It made some of the tension leak out of Techno's shoulders. "What's wrong?"

Techno just sighed. "I have a headache," he said. "Nothing to worry about."

"Oh," Wilbur said, perking up. "Maybe I can help."

His dubiousness must have shown on his face, because Wilbur scowled at him.

"I *could* help."

"I think I'd rather go sit in my room in the dark," Techno said. "Or kill myself."

Wilbur gave him a two eyebrow raise this time.

Techno groaned. "That doesn't leave this room." Technoblade wouldn't have to kill himself if Phil found out he'd said that joke out loud to Wilbur.

"Okay, but seriously," Wilbur said. "I can use my powers to hit certain frequencies that relieve pain."

So far, Techno had seen Wilbur use his powers exactly twice. Once, he'd used it to knock a book off a high shelf. Another time he'd shattered glass. Both times it had hurt Techno's ears.

"I'm good," Techno said.

Wilbur frowned at him. "Please! Please let me try! I promise I'll make it better."

"You are currently making it worse," Techno pointing out with a grimace.

Wilbur gave him another frown, this one more intense. He said nothing else, just stared into Techno's soul.

"...What are you doing?" Techno finally asked, confused.

The expression cleared off Wilbur's face. "I'm *pouting*, Technoblade."

"Well, stop it. It makes your face look weird."

Wilbur stuck his tongue out at him.

"Yeah... not making it look any less weird."

Wilbur just puffed out a breath. "Let me try for 10 minutes," he begged. "If it doesn't help, I promise to go upstairs and read a book silently in my bedroom until Dad comes home."

Oh... that was tempting. The only reason Techno was currently downstairs was that he was on babysitting duty while Phil went grocery shopping. If he could convince Wilbur to promise not to get into any trouble, Techno could go sit alone in the dark.

"Fine," Techno relented, "go get the timer from the kitchen."

"We're *actually* timing it?" Wilbur asked.

"Yup."

Wilbur sighed and got up to grab the egg timer from the kitchen.

He plopped down on the couch next to Techno when he returned. "Okay," he said. "It's going to take a bit of experimenting to get the right pitch, so I'm going to need to see your face. Lay on your back. You can either put your head in my lap or on the cushion right next to me."

He suggested Techno put his head in his lap so casually that Techno almost forgot to consider how that would mean they'd be touching. He did remember though. On a normal day, maybe he'd be okay with it, but the pain in his head made his entire body feel raw.

He moved to lay down next to Wilbur.

Wilbur smiled down at him, a crinkle appearing at the edges of his eyes.

"Call me 'cute' and the deal is off," Techno said.

"Aw," Wilbur said with a frown. 'Pouting' again.

"Just start the timer, Wilbur."

"Fine," he said. The timer made a series of clicking noises as Wilbur set it. He flashed the now ticking timer at Techno before setting it down on the coffee table.

It started with a low, quiet hum. The hum was soft enough that it didn't agitate the headache, but it didn't help either. The sound slowly shifted over the next few seconds, evolving into something even lower. The sound of a new note cut off a moment before Techno's brain fully registered the increased pain.

"Sorry," Wilbur said. "Wrong way." He reached over like he wanted to touch Techno's brow but aborted the movement before doing so.

He restarted his humming in that neutral pitch he'd started in, sliding slowly up this time.

Wilbur hit a note, and Techno felt something click in his brain. His jaw inadvertently untensed. (He hadn't even realized it was tense.) Wilbur's eyes tracked his expression intently. He shifted his tone up just a bit more and suddenly it felt like Techno's headache had been physically lifted out of his brain.

Techno blinked up at him in shock, and Wilbur's lip tilted up even as he kept humming.

The headache wasn't gone, Techno knew. It was still lingering there at the edges of his brain, but even the momentary relief was amazing.

Wilbur paused for a moment and the headache settled back in, though the intensity was slightly lessened. "Better?" he asked.

"Yeah," Techno said. "I mean, it came back when you stopped, but it's still better than it was."

"Well, we probably need more than one note to get it to go completely away," Wilbur explained. "There's probably a sequence of notes that will work best. We'll have to experiment more to get there."

"Okay," Techno agreed easily.

Wilbur chuckled softly. His hand twitched towards Techno's head again. "Techno's singing a different tune, now, huh?" His eyes were sparkling.

"It felt like my brain was attempting to grow to double the size of my skull before you started," Techno said. "I didn't know your powers could just make it *stop doing that*."

"Brains like sound," Wilbur said with a shrug. "Want me to keep going now?"

"Yeah," Techno said, "also..." he paused, and let his eyes flicker closed, "it's fine if you touch my hair, but only my hair."

"Okay, Techno," Wilbur said. A hand patted the top of his head twice before the humming resumed. He began with the tone he'd found before, the headache lifting from Techno's brain instantly once more.

Who knew Wilbur could be good for a headache too?

## Chapter End Notes

It's the origins of the Technoblade headache song! Yay!



[from Imgflip Meme Generator](#)

Pouting only works on Phil, Wilbur.

# Things That Slip Through the Cracks

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Wilbur had a problem. It was a disconcerting thing this problem, because it was a problem that, honestly, Ghostbur didn't give even half a shit about.

It was all *school's* fault. Ghostbur didn't want to go to school. Maybe he wouldn't have minded if he was being asked to take university classes or something. Those could be interesting and mostly only took an hour or an hour and a half before you could go off and do something else. Primary school, on the other hand, was an absolute drag. It was almost 7 whole hours stuck in a room with a teacher and 28 8-year-old children that he vaguely remembered once knowing. Lunch was worse. (It was loud and *sticky*.) Recess was boring and, the one time he'd tried to make it fun, he'd gotten into trouble for "creating a death cult." He would much rather spend all of his time with Technoblade and Dad.

Sometimes, he'd disassociate after taking 2 minutes to finish a math worksheet and contemplate burning the building down just so he'd get to stay home for a few days. Maybe he'd even let them catch him, so he'd get expelled and not have to come back here ever.

...

That would make Dad *sad* though, and if Ghostbur accidentally killed some child in the blaze, he'd been even more sad, so Ghostbur restrained himself to fantasies of flames.

All that said, Ghostbur did not care about school. However, in the cracks of time where Ghostbur couldn't bother paying attention in school, something else had begun to slip through. For a lack of a better name, he'd started to call that thing Wilbur. It was not the Wilbur who had died decades and a few weeks ago. That Wilbur had been worn away by time like a rock at the mouth of a river. But it was something and it *was* Ghostbur, but it wasn't *Ghostbur*.

And that thing, that Wilbur, had a problem.

Dad had promised Wilbur he could go to the train museum if he could get an A in all of his classes. Ghostbur knew every single exhibit that train museum had and would have, and he didn't care about going (other than thinking it would be funny when Dad realized he'd gotten all As.) Wilbur was getting an A in almost every class except one that Ghostbur honestly couldn't help him with, at least not directly. Indirectly, Ghostbur was a good problem solver and... his solution would serve some of his personal goals as well.

Ghostbur threw himself down on the couch with a dramatic huff, his legs over the couch's arm and his head on the middle cushion. Technoblade, who had been sitting on the far couch cushion and glaring at a picture book like it had killed him thrice before, glanced at him. Ghostbur could feel him debating if he'd prefer to go back to his picture book or ask Ghostbur "What's wrong?" so took the decision out of his hands.

"I'm getting a B in PE," Ghostbur informed him.

"...And?" Techno asked, taking the opportunity to close his book and toss it on the coffee table.

“And, it’s the only class I’m not getting an A in!” Ghostbur exclaimed. “I can’t get an A in everything, but not in PE! It’s not even real PE, like, for teenagers. It’s PE for *8-year-olds*.”

Techno raised an eyebrow. “So, then, how exactly are you getting a B in ‘8-year-old PE’?”

Wilbur groaned. “I may have... cheated in dodgeball with my powers once or twice.” Ghostbur decided to be honest. “Or, like... a lot of times, really. Basically, constantly until I got caught. Then a few more times after that.”

“Shouldn’t have gotten caught,” Techno concluded.

Wilbur scowled up at him. “Thanks for your amazingly relevant advice, Technoblade.”

“Did you want advice?” Techno asked. “It sounds like you are just pouting.”

“I am not pouting,” Ghostbur said, though his mouth was, admittedly in a shape that could be classified as a pout. “I am problem solving.”

“...I have yet to hear a possible soluti-”

“Shush,” Ghostbur said, pointing at him. “The solution is, my PE teacher said she’ll give me an A if I can meet or exceed all state standards in our test at the end of the semester. I am asking you to help me make sure I can.”

“You’re asking me for help?” Techno asked, looking confused.

“Well, yeah,” Ghostbur said. “I thought it’d be your type of thing. I could ask Dad, but this whole venture is a bet against him. It’d be a conflict of interests.”

“You want my help with a *class*?” Techno confirmed, still looking at him.

Ghostbur blinked up at him for a moment, confused about his confusion. Then, he figured out the problem. “PE stands for physical education,” he explained. “It’s working out.”

Techno’s confusion cleared instantly. “Training?” he asked. “You want my help with training? 8-year-olds do training?”

“They don’t usually call it ‘training’ when you’re 8,” Wilbur said, “but yeah, I guess that’s what I’m asking for.”

“Do 7-year-olds train?” Techno asked. “You said there are standards. Are there standards for 7-year-olds.”

“...Probably?” Wilbur answered. “Although, you are recovering from malnutrition, so the standards may be a bit different for you at the moment.”

“Show me the standards,” Techno demanded. “When do you need to be ready by exactly? Do you know your baselines? Actually, I don’t know my baselines right now, so we’ll just measure them for both of us.”

Ghostbur thought Techno may be... too excited for this. Especially considering how underweight he currently was.

Wilbur *really* wanted an A in PE.



“Let me find the handout my teacher gave us at the beginning of the semester. I think it has the standards for all grades,” Wilbur said.



Technoblade used his new, very basic, writing skills to come up with a training schedule for Wilbur that should put him in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for all skills being tested for. He even added a bit of running even though there were no running standards for children under 12-years-old listed.

Luckily, about 1/3 of the skills were related to arm strength, and before Wilbur’s death, Dad had been regularly letting him shoot with a bow. So, he was a bit stronger than most children his age. They’d found while establishing baselines that his body was also pretty good at running, but he struggled with the sit-ups and wasn’t particularly flexible. Wilbur probably could have passed the tests without Techno’s intervention if he’d tried really hard, but it was going to be easy to get up to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for most skills under Techno’s plans, let alone the 75<sup>th</sup>.

At least, it was easy for Wilbur.

Techno was, uh, struggling with the realization that he was incredibly physically unfit even for a 7-year-old.

Only 3 weeks in, the ¼ mile jog they’d decided on after a bit more research was easy for Wilbur. Techno... finished it.

“I hate you,” Techno panted from the grass. He was flat on his back.

“You really should walk for your cooldown,” Wilbur pointed out. Techno glared at him. “Or just walk part of the ¼ mile. It’s fine.”

“We said jog ¼ of a mile.”

“Technoblade said jog a ¼ of a mile,” Wilbur corrected. “Wilbur, Dad, and your doctor said Technoblade is malnourished.”

Technoblade glared at a cloud above their heads. “One day, I will be bigger and stronger than you,” he promised, “and you will never win a race again.”

Ghostbur did not point out that the jog had not been a race, and Wilbur could have run a lot faster than he had been if needed. “Not if you don’t eat your vegetables, you won’t,” he quipped.

Technoblade very discretely flipped him off by scratching his nose with his middle finger. Ghostbur pretended to not recognize the hand gesture.

Then, Techno was rolling, ending up on his hands and knees. He paused there for a few moments.

Maybe Ghostbur should tell Dad about the training sessions. Since Wilbur was trying to hide his B in PE, they just told him they were going to the park for an hour every afternoon. Techno tended to push himself a bit too hard, though Ghostbur was able to mostly restrain him to reasonable things.

Techno pushed himself to his feet and started walking.

Wilbur would let it be for now.

## Chapter End Notes

I'm sure Technoblade will be completely rational and reasonable about the fact that he's physically weaker than most 7-year-olds.

I'm sure he will do completely fine with a training regiment not directly regulated by Phil and with personal knowledge of numbers that mean you are worse than everyone else.

What about [nonlinear storytelling](#)?

## End Notes

Also, I should probably address the Wilbur Soot situation. I won't do so here. Instead, see [this link](#) on Tumblr. It's a brief explanation because it's really not my place to comment on this stuff, but since I write fanfiction involving the character, I thought I should say something.

## Works inspired by this one

[Technoblade And The Horrors Of Babysitting](#) by [EmiWritings](#)

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